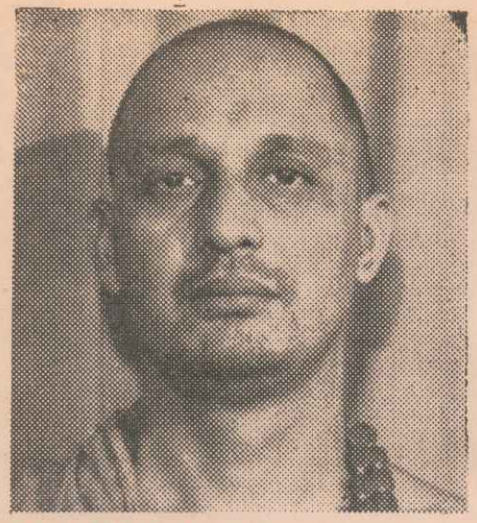


SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI

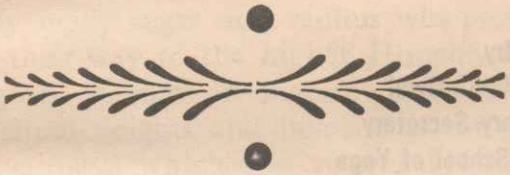
* Born in 1923 at Almora, U.P., India.
* Joined his guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati, in the Himalayan town of Rishikesh in 1943.
* Completed his sannyasa training and began parivrajaka life in 1956. Wandered extensively throughout India.
* Realized his mission and founded the International Yoga Fellowship Movement in 1962 and the Bihar School of Yoga at Munger in 1964.
* Recognized as an adept and authority of the deepest esoteric knowledge by saints and sages throughout India in 1973.
* Has been travelling widely since then to corners of the globe, spreading the mes of Yoga, and guiding and inspiring cor disciples, aspirants, ashrams and cent

Rs 25/-

ISHAVASYA UPANISHAD

ISHAVASYA UPANISHAD

text
translation
commentary



Swami Satyananda Saraswati

BIHAR SCHOOL OF YOGA, MUNGER, BIHAR, INDIA

© 1973
All copyrights reserved by
Bihar School of Yoga
Ganga Darshan
Munger, Bihar, India

1st edition 1973
2nd edition 1984

Published by
Sri G.K. Kejriwal
Honorary Secretary
Bihar School of Yoga

Printed by
Swami Haripremananda Saraswati
Ashram Graphics
Ganga Darshan
Munger, Bihar, India

All editing, composing, printing and binding done as karma yoga by the swamis and inmates of Bihar School of Yoga.

SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI

Swami Satyananda Saraswati was born in a small town near Almora in the foothills of the Himalayas. As a child he showed extraordinary qualities and had his first spiritual experience at the age of six. He was blessed by many sages and sadhus who passed by his home on their way to the higher Himalayan regions. They inspired in him an intense desire to reach the same spiritual heights and invoked in him a strong sense of vairagya which was remarkable for one so young.

At the age of nineteen, he left his family and home to search for his guru. After some time, he went to Rishikesh and there he met his spiritual master, Swami Sivananda. During the twelve years he spent with his guru, Swami Satyananda plunged himself into karma yoga to such an extent that Swami Sivananda said he did the work of four people. Like an ideal disciple, Swami Satyananda worked from dawn until late at night, involving himself in every kind of work, from cleaning to management of the ashram. Service to guru was his passion and his joy.

Although he had a very keen intellect and his guru had described him as a 'versatile genius', Swami Satyananda's learning did not come from instruction or study in the ashram. He followed with faith his guru's

one command– "Work hard and you will be purified. You do not have to bring the light; the light will unfold from within you." And this is what happened. He gained an enlightened understanding of the secrets of spiritual life, and has since become a great authority on hatha yoga, tantra and kundalini.

After spending twelve years with his guru, Swami Satyananda took to parivrajaka life and wandered extensively for eight years, travelling throughout India, to Afghanistan, Burma, Nepal and Ceylon. During this period he met many great saints and yogis, and he spent time in seclusion, formulating and perfecting the yogic techniques that could alleviate the sufferings of humanity.

In 1963 his mission became apparent and he founded the International Yoga Fellowship Movement. And, because his mission had been realized while he was staying in Munger, he settled there by the Ganga and founded the Bihar School of Yoga in order to help more people towards the spiritual path. Before long, students were coming from all over India and abroad, and soon Swami Satyananda's teachings were rapidly spreading throughout the world.

In 1968 he went on an extensive world tour popularizing the ancient yogic practices among the people of all castes, creeds, religions and nationalities. Since then, Swami Satyananda has become wellknown on every continent and has become a leading exponent of yoga and tantra, guiding millions of spiritual seekers and inspiring many ashrams and centers throughout the world. For the last ten years he has been dividing his time between foreign tours, Indian tours and residence at Munger.

BIHAR SCHOOL OF YOGA

Bihar School of Yoga is the home base of Swami Satyananda Saraswati and the official headquarters of the International Yoga Fellowship Movement. It was founded in 1964 to impart Yogic training to householders and sannyasins alike. This unique institution has since become a focal point for a mass return to the ancient precepts of the yogic sciences. In 1968, the first Yoga Teacher Training Course was held for European aspirants. Since then, the school has grown into an international training center of great renown with a large following and numerous branches and affiliated centers in India and abroad.

Today Bihar School of Yoga consists of Sivananda Ashram, the original center, and Ganga Darshan, the new ashram complex which is built on a large hill overlooking the Ganga. Here, amidst an atmosphere of natural beauty, surrounded by beautiful gardens, green paddy fields and a majestic 280° panoramic sweep of the Ganga, a new vision of Yogic life is inspired.

The techniques of integral Yoga taught here are a synthesis of all approaches to personal development. Short and long term sadhana and Yoga health management courses are conducted by trained sannyasins on group or individual basis for day and residential students. Kriya yoga courses are also conducted.

Yoga teacher training courses are an important part of the curriculum. One month courses are frequently conducted for householders, qualifying them to teach the simpler practices of asanas and pranayama to family and community members. More advanced courses of longer duration are also available.

Bihar School of Yoga has always been known for its excellent sannyasa training and was one of the first institutions to initiate and train female and foreign sannyasins on a large scale. Gurukul training for children provides special guidance for boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 18.

The institution houses a well staffed Research Coordinating Center with a large collection of books and data, where most of the publications on yoga therapy and research are compiled. Ashram Graphics, the modern printing press, prints all the BSY publications. It has a wide range of equipment and is fully staffed and run by sannyasins and inmates of the ashram who do everything from typesetting to dispatch.

Conventions, seminars and lecture tours help to spread yoga from door to door and from shore to shore. Every year, Bihar School of Yoga sponsors large scale national and international conventions, conducted by Swami Satyananda. In addition, trained sannyasins are available for conducting organized conventions, seminars and lecture tours in all areas of India and the world. This provides a solution for the yogic minded people who find it impossible to make a journey to Munger or any of the other branch ashrams.

CONTENTS

Heading		Page
The Essence of the Upanishads		
Introduction...		1
Shanti Mantra		8
First Wave	(mantra 1)	14
Second Wave	(mantra 2)	21
Third Wave	(mantra 3)	27
Fourth Wave	(mantra 4)	32
	(mantra 5)	36
	(mantra 6)	42
	(mantra 7)	46
	(mantra 8)	48
Fifth Wave	(mantra 9)	51
	(mantra 10)	54
	(mantra 11)	56
	(mantra 12)	58
	(mantra 13)	61
	(mantra 14)	63
Sixth Wave	(mantra 15)	67
	(mantra 16)	68
	(mantra 17)	70
Seventh Wave	(mantra 18)	72
The Mantras	(Deva Nagari)	73
	(Accented Roman)	76
	English translation	79
Phonetic Pronunciation Guide		82

THE ESSENCE OF THE UPANISHADS

(An excerpt taken from the book: *Essence of Principal Upanishads* by Swami Sivananda Saraswati, published 1959 by the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, Rishikesh.)

The Glory of the Upanishads

(1) Salutations to all Brahma Vidya Gurus, or the preceptors of knowledge of Brahman.

(2) Prostrations to Satchidananda Para Brahma, who is the prop, basis and source of everything.

(3) The acme of wisdom of the sages is to be found in the Upanishads.

(4) The Upanishads teach the philosophy of absolute unity.

(5) Knowledge of the Upanishads destroys ignorance, the seed of samsara.

(6) Behind the names and forms of the world dwells the eternal, infinite Satchidananda Brahman.

(7) This world is indwelt by Para Brahman or the Absolute.

(8) Renounce all desires. Renounce egoism, selfishness and identification with the body. Then alone will you attain moksha or liberation.

(9) The desire for liberation will destroy all worldly desires.

(10) Do your religious rites and daily duties without expectation of the fruits of your actions.

(11) Constantly do selfless service for the benefit of humanity with Atma bhav or devotion to God. You will purify your heart in this way. Then realization will dawn.

(12) Your work and actions will not bind you if you perform them without egoism and without expectations.

The Nature of Atman

(13) This Atman is motionless yet at the same time swifter than the mind. Why? Because it is all-pervading and complete in itself, without any limitation.

(14) The Atman is already at all planes the mind can reach, because it is everywhere and infinite.

(15) The Atman is distant yet it is near. It is within all this and yet it is also outside all this.

(16) For the ignorant and those people who are totally immersed in worldliness, it is far away. For the enquirer and for he who is equipped with purity of mind, it is very near.

(17) The Atman is infinitely subtle. It is the inner Self of all beings. It fills and encompasses everything in the universe.

(18) The Atman is the substratum or basis of all beings.

(19) Sages see all beings in Atman, and Atman in all beings.

(20) He who sees that the Atman pervades everything fears nothing.

(21) A sage who has realized the Atman beholds that all objects and all beings are not really distant from his own Self, and that his Atman is the very same Atman of all.

(22) The Atman is the same consciousness that is shared by all beings.

(23) The Atman is the same in a king and a peasant, a saint and a sinner, a cobbler and a barber, an ant and an elephant, a tree and a stone; it is the same Atman.

(24) How can a liberated soul who is resting in his own Atman and who has an exalted cosmic consciousness shrink from any being or object with a feeling of repulsion? How can he dislike anything? How can he hate anything?

(25) Mere intellectual knowledge that the one Self abides in all beings is not enough. Aparoksha anubhava, direct perception or actual Self-realization is the only way.

(26) The knower of Brahman becomes fearless and transcends delusion and sorrow.

(27) The three knots of the heart, avidya (ignorance), kama (desire), and karma (action), are annihilated by the knowledge of Brahman.

(28) The realized man always rejoices in the bliss of Atman. Even the heaviest sorrow cannot shake or disturb him.

(29) The Atman is all-pervading, bright, bodiless, pure, untouched by sin or evil action, omniscient, transcendental and self-existent. He is scatheless and without muscles.

(30) This Atman is without a physical body, without an astral body and without a causal body.

(31) The Atman is totally independent and it never depends on anything else.

(32) The Atman is beyond the reach of the senses and the mind.

(33) The Atman is the mind of the mind, the ear of the ears, the eye of the eyes and the life of the lives.

(34) Behind the breath, the senses and the mind is the supreme Brahman or the Absolute.

(35) The mind, the senses and the breath function only by the Light of Brahman.

Knowledge of Brahman

(36) When karma (work and action) is done without expectations of the fruits, the mind is purified and the spiritual aspirant experiences a strong desire for final emancipation.

(37) The need to know Brahman and to attain liberation from the endless cycle of births and deaths can only arise in a person who is endowed with a pure and calm mind, who is desireless in the world of forms and names and who is disgusted with the sensual objects of this illusory, material world.

(38) Realization of Brahman cannot be attained by logical discussions.

(39) It is said in the scriptures that in order to know Brahman, the spiritual aspirant has to approach a preceptor who is well versed in the Vedas and who is centred in the light of Brahman.

(40) The scriptures also say that he who has studied under a teacher, knows the Truth.

(41) Only that knowledge that is acquired by studying under a teacher or guru is of use.

(42) Knowledge of Brahman totally destroys ignorance, which is the cause of bondage and the driving force behind actions performed for the attainment of objects of desire.

(43) The scriptures say "There is neither sorrow nor delusion for the knower of the Self, who beholds the one Atman everywhere. He who knows the Atman goes beyond sorrow."

(44) Moksha (liberation) cannot be attained by karma (actions) alone or karma combined with intellectual knowledge. Moksha can only come from

jnana (spiritual wisdom). Karma purifies the mind and helps the aspirant to get knowledge.

(45) The performance of karma will take one only to the world of manas or pitraloka, the world of the ancestors. It cannot make one immortal.

(46) Brahman, the only real entity, cannot be attained by any other means than by removal of ignorance through knowledge of the Self.

(47) He who attains the supreme Brahman, the unborn, unchangeable, birthless, undecaying, immortal, fearless, eternal, self-luminous, all-blissful and all-pervading, is freed from the wheel of births and deaths.

(48) Para Brahman, the Absolute, controls and guides the mind, life and the senses.

(49) Having abandoned the idea and feeling of I-ness and rising above the life of the senses, the wise become immortal.

INTRODUCTION

Let us contemplate over the literal meaning of 'Upanishad'.

Definition of Upanishad:

The Sanskrit word Upanishad is a combination of three root words: *upa*– near or close by; *ni*– to learn; *shad*– to sit. So, Upanishad means 'to sit near and learn'.

There have been many translations of the word Upanishad. Some scholars prefer to call it 'secret doctrine' but it is not true. Others call it 'book of knowledge.' In fact, the word Upanishad is used for the knowledge received at the feet of the Master. It practically means notes taken down by the disciples in ancient days, when Guru gave lessons to them on the supreme knowledge. The lessons were recorded in the minds of the disciples in former days, and later on the whole thing was written down for posterity. Since the instructions of a Guru were heard and remembered first and noted down later by the disciples, it is known as Shruti also. Shruti means 'that which is heard'.

Language:

There are ten principal Upanishads, thirty minor ones, and in all 108 popular Upanishads. Some of them are quite old. They can be traced back many

centuries before the birth of Christ. They are written in a language which was spoken in India during the Vedic period. The Sanskrit of the Upanishads is different from the Sanskrit language of today. The rules of grammar are also different. Usually, a student of Sanskrit of the present day finds it difficult to read the Upanishads independently. The language used in the Upanishads is known as old or Vedic Sanskrit.

History:

Who were the Seers of the Upanishads in India, and what is their social and historical background?

It is a subject of great interest. In India, Brahmins safeguarded the religious and theological knowledge of the country. Whatever they preached, sincerely or insincerely, pertained to this lower world, such as rituals and ceremonies for birth, marriage, funeral, etc. Rituals, such as propitiating gods or worshipping nature, were taught to the people.

The study of the history of the Vedic period reveals that there was a time when the masses were very much interested in the rituals and practised Karmakand, which meant a 'ritualistic religion'. In big yajnas or fire ceremonies, thousands of people used to get together to take somarasa, the spiritual drink, and to perform fire-worship. In order to conduct the worship at that time many thousand quintals of food grains were offered as oblation to the fire.

Search for Knowledge:

These Vedic people had their own definition, description and dictionary for knowledge about God. It was, nevertheless, a good thing for householders. Although there were few people in the society at that time, still they very often questioned: 'Is it all true what the priests preach to us about God and the temples?'

Since people had their own liabilities and responsibilities to their family life, they could not find time to get a true answer to their enquiries. Some of them then thought they had better renounce responsibilities and retire into the jungle for seclusion, contemplation and meditation, to find out the truth. Is there a God sitting somewhere? Or, are there many gods responsible for different departments of the world? Are they like angels and ghosts? Does God come, or send somebody as His representative? Thus, religious beliefs were very much questioned in India, and people wanted to find out the truth. Therefore, after fufilling the obligations of their family life, they retired into seclusion, either with their wife or alone.

Brahma Vidya Gurus:

Those who went into seclusion were not sannyasins in the strict sense of the word. They excluded themselves from the family and led a very simple and austere life in a hermitage, and started contemplation about the nature of the Universe and their own body. They aspired to know the fundamentals of nature and the mysteries of life, death, birth, rebirth, etc. Perhaps, some of them got the answers and therefore they were known as rishis, or the seers, because they saw. Then those rishis thought it would be better if true knowledge was given to the ignorant people also who were following the religion of the temples blindly. A few among them should be helped and lifted up from the stagnant belief of religions. So, they got a band of disciples and trained them in the new thought. When they realized the truth, they were sent to different places. Then came into existence the 'Guruparampara' which means 'the tradition of Gurus or teachers'. A tradition of Guru and discipleship was established. Such teachers are known as Brahma Vidya Gurus.

Temples of the Gurus were not established. Unlike ordinary priests, they did not conduct worship, prayers or sermons in a temple. They possessed knowledge and communicated it to their disciples, and the disciples in their turn communicated it to their own disciples. The whole truth was communicated in this manner. Then, from time to time, new successors of the tradition came up. But, the ultimate truth, for which the great men had renounced, was not simple to realize. It was a truth of the unknown, and shall ever remain unknown. Perhaps they got only a glimpse of that true knowledge, and this fact was accepted and admitted in all the Upanishads. The Upanishads do not claim or suggest that they have known the truth in toto.

The Upanishads, very often, use the word 'neti', which means, 'this is not the end'. Suppose, I want to say something about a person, but am unable to express everything. I may say 'this is not everything about him', In Sanskrit '*na*' means 'not' and '*iti*' means 'the end'. It means, the Upanishads admit that whatever they have spoken about the truth, is not the ultimate 'end all'. The entire Universe or God, or the Supreme Truth, is not only this much. Throughout the world, there was never a set of frank and true thinkers like the ancient rishis, who dedicated and spent their lives in the search and re-search of the Truth, and ultimately declared its forms. Their final statement is: "Not only this; not only this."

The Origin of Brahma Vidya:

In the tradition of Brahma Vidya Gurus, many rishis and great men came later. From time to time, they added their own fund of knowledge to what was already existing. A collection of what they said to their close disciples is called the Upanishads.

Who were these Gurus? Kshatriyas led this movement of truth in India. They questioned the authority of the Brahminical statements of gods, demi-gods and natural gods, though they did not mind worshipping. Kshatriyas were great kings and warriors, and thought it proper to seek true knowledge. So they renounced their homes and went into the jungles to find out the Truth. The Upanishads make us believe the Kshatriyas were great among the rishis.

When Brahmins came to know that a particular science of truth was being preached by a few rishis, they could not understand it. Because, so far, all these people were practising only Karmakanda. They were given to believe that if you do good, *here*, that goodness will be rewarded *there* by certain gods.

The Brahmins could not understand the truth that 'there is one essence and that is all-pervading'. They believed that God is sitting somewhere, and from there He is controlling the movements of stars, sun and moon. When the truth of the Supreme, the Ultimate, the Final, the Conclusive, the All-pervading and of one essence came in, the Brahmins could neither stand nor understand it, because it was something new to them.

Then, the great Brahmin priests began going to Kshatriya rishis in quest of knowledge. A great Brahmin named Yagyavalkya went to Ajatshatru, the King of Varanasi, and many Brahmins went to King Janak, a Kshatriya emperor, to learn knowledge of the True Being. Finally, Brahma Vidya was given to all.

Many Brahmins later thought that this may mislead the people and the masses. So, the Truth was not expounded by them. They thought that all the Upanishads should be compiled properly first, and should be given only to a disciple by his Guru by word of mouth.

The Wisdom of the Upanishads:

The Upanishads were memorized by heart by the disciples, before getting permission to write them down.

I was taught each and every word by heart with closed eyes in a traditional way. It is desirable to maintain this tradition. Even if the books are lost or destroyed at any time, they may be rewritten. All sannyasins belonging to this tradition should know all the Upanishads by heart.

The Upanishads do not contain a sectarian knowledge. We never consider the Upanishads as a knowledge or wisdom of the Hindus. It is the wisdom which the seers developed in this geographical area of this country. This knowledge has nothing to do with any sect, and has very little to do with any god. It always talks about the true essence of this Universe, which is pervading in man and animal, sentient and insentient creatures. So, naturally, the Upanishads should be regarded as the fountainhead of the Supreme Knowledge.

Opinions expressed on the Upanishads by some of the great scholars are noteworthy. The great philosopher Schopenhauer said that the Upanishads were a solace to his life, and even after death they would continue to be a solace to his soul. In the same manner, Max Muller, the great oriental scholar of Germany, wrote the following in his introduction to 'The Sacred Books of the East'.

"If there could be any collection of the permanent, unchanging, unchallengeable thoughts of the Supreme Being, free from any tinge of sectarianism and communalism, it were the Upanishads."

Research has been made on these Upanishads, and they are translated into English, German and other non-Indian languages. Upanishads have received the attention of many non-English scholars and authors

also, who presented the translation to their countrymen. The Upanishads find a special place in the higher faculties of nearly all universities in the department of philosophy.

Yajurveda:

Ishavasya Upanishad is the last chapter of Yajurveda. Yajurveda is one of the 4 Vedas which are considered to be the source of Indian wisdom and ancient learning. Commenting on the Vedas, the great scholar Max Muller said that the Vedas are the most ancient books in the library of mankind. Man wrote his first book in the form of the Vedas alone.

Ishavasya Upanishad:

Vedas are 4 in number. The 1st one is known as Rigveda, the 2nd as Yajurveda, the 3rd as Samaveda and the 4th and the last one, in chronological order, Atharvaveda. Ishavasya Upanishad is the last chapter of Yajurveda. The whole text of Yajurveda is divided into 40 chapters. The first 39 chapters of this Veda talk about the Mantras in connection with rituals, ceremonies, worship, poems, incantations, hymns, etc. and the last chapter of Yajurveda talks about nothing except the Supreme Knowledge. Therefore, this Upanishad is considered to be the seed of the entire Indian philosophy in general, and of the Vedanta philosophy in particular. Many scholars of East and West consider that in India, the Vedantic philosophy of Parabrahma, the Supreme Being, is the science and philosophy of Brahmavidya and the cosmic truth, developed from this little Upanishad. Hence, this Upanishad is known as the 'Vedanta-Upanishad' also, but Ishavasya is its most popular name.

SHANTI MANTRA

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

Ōm pūrṅamadah pūrṅamīdaṁ pūrṅāt pūrṅamudachyaté,
pūrṅasya pūrṅamādāya pūrṅaméwa awashīshyaté.
Ōm Shāntīh Shāntīh Shāntīh

The first two lines of Ishavasya Upanishad are the Shanti Mantras, or the mystic syllables of peace. It is a tradition that an Upanishad begins and ends with a Mantra called Shanti Mantra. The meaning of this mantra is wonderful.

Translation & Explanation:

"That is full, this is full. From full, the full is taken, the full has come. If you take out the full from the full, the full alone remains."

It can be said again in this manner: "This is one and that is one. From one the one has come, and if from one, you take out one, one alone remains."

The mathematical equation of this mantra would be: "One minus one is equal to one." How?

The word *purna* needs a detailed commentary.

Purna means 'full'. Literally, purna means 'complete'. Philosophically, purna means 'infinite', because

nothing else but infinite can be full. Infinity is something of which the beginning and the end cannot be determined. It is *Ananta* and it is *Akhanda*. *Ananta*; endless and *Akhanda*; partless, divisionless, fractionless.

If you think about the cosmos, or this great universe, about which much has been spoken and yet much remains to be known, you will realize that there seems to be two states or forms of existence. One form of existence is that which is visible. It is called the manifest universe, or the vyakta, it is the manifested form of universe, which is seen, known, recognized, and which can be discovered, in the far and near future. The other form of existence is unmanifest, invisible and unknown to us. So, there are two types of universe: the manifest and the unmanifest.

One cosmos or universe is visible to me, to you and to the scientists. Maybe, in the far future, they will be able to know many more things. The endless galaxies of stars, the Milky Way, and the hundreds and thousands of solar systems in addition to our own solar system which exist millions and billions of light years away from here, constitute our universe.

That universe which has become manifest and has materialized in a shape, form, pattern or substance, like Earth, Sun, Moon, Pluto, Neptune, etc. and that which has evolved to a particular stage, is spoken of in this mantra, by the word *idam*, which means, 'this manifested universe'.

In addition to this universe, which is visible, recognizable and discoverable, there seems to be, and should be, another part of the universe, which is called *avyakta*, or the unmanifest. Indian philosophy gives a lot of reference to this aspect of reality; that there ought to be a face to the Universe which is unmanifest. Even as a number of seeds are sown in your garden, a few come up, and it remains to be said, 'Well, a few

seeds are still there', so the universe which has not come up, but which is still in the bosom of the infinite, is indicated by the word *adaha* 'the unmanifest universe'.

That unmanifest universe which has not taken a shape, and is lying hidden in the darkness of nature, is infinite. It is not a limited thing. That unmanifest universe is not a thing of limited dimensions. The cosmos also appears to be infinite. From that infinite universe, this finite universe has come up. All that we see is an evolved form of that unevolved and unmanifest reality, which is yet to come.

The usual mathematical law prescribes: 'one minus one is equal to zero'. What is already obvious and clear, both to our eyes and the mind, is this manifest universe, which has come out from that unmanifest stage of the universe; uniquely supreme in its quality of oneness and singleness, unmatched and unequalled in its true and real unity. Evidently when we think and talk of the manifest unity of infinite dimensions, which is part and parcel of the unmanifest unity, also of infinite dimensions, it is *not* a matter of deduction but purely an issue of manifestation.

But, please understand more fully the meaning of the word infinite.

When you say infinite, you postulate something which has no beginning and no end. Therefore, it only means that this manifest universe is only an extension of that unmanifest essence or reality of Creation. Therefore, this mantra says that if this universe is an outcome of that manifest prakriti, then the unmanifest remains unaffected, unchanged and unaltered. This is the literal meaning of this mantra.

Now, let me give a very simple meaning of this. In fact, in the Vedanta and in the Upanishads, we believe that anything you see in the Universe is not everything. It is the imminent aspect of a Supreme

Power, and to a Vedantin, who is the seeker of knowledge, the existence of God cannot be proved and spoken of in terms of theology and mythology.

If the God of a bhakta is theriomorphic or anthropomorphic, like Hindu and Greek Gods, then the God of a Vedantin is the manifest and the unmanifest infinite universe. We must understand that a true Vedantin believes in an infinite, formless, all-pervading and eternal essence of reality. He does not believe in a God who is subjected and conditioned by time and limitations of the mind. A Vedantin, a seeker of truth, does not believe in a God who is subject to your visions, fancies and imaginations. The search of a Vedantin, starts with a belief that there is an eternal and infinite reality.

There are two sources by which you can know the Truth. One is, to go on negating the Truth; and the other is to accept the Truth as infinite. There have been people who negated the Truth in order to know it. They denied the existence of an eternal reality. In the wisdom of the great philosopher Descartes, every negation becomes a positive assertion of reality. The more he denies reality, the more he logically affirms it. To negate the existence of a thing is one approach. This approach is only for great thinkers and not for cowards. To deny the truth and the reality needs courage and bravery. People are afraid to deny God, because they think, if they deny God, God will punish them. But, brave people, who go in search of reality, do not accept God hypothetically. They deny Him first, and as a result of that they understand God, if there is any, in the most true form. They are not hypnotized by the statements made by a few half-baked thinkers. They say, "No, we do not accept anything which is superficial." And that is one approach, this is the approach of an atheist. The meaning of atheism in the West is different. In Indian philosophy, atheism is one of the ways of the quest of reality.

The second approach is, to accept that there should be something, otherwise there could not exist law, order and a system. That combines ontological, teleological and cosmological evidence; by observing timely recurrence of seasons and witnessing the definite laws in the operation of nature. It seems that a few sincere thinkers started the quest for Truth, but ultimately they could not arrive at the point that is God, and they got lost in the darkness. They went ahead in search of Truth and there came a certain stage where they began to cry, 'Oh! I am the Truth; I am the Truth.' They were lost in the Truth, and they became the Truth itself. This is the process and the theme, which the Upanishads have picked up.

Throughout the Upanishads one finds that there is a search for the ultimate knowledge. There is a quest for the ultimate and the true, for the eternal, infinite and the unchangeable being. Ishavasya is only one of the Upanishads. There are many hundreds more. In all the Upanishads, you may find that God is not accepted in toto.

The words 'God' in English, and 'Paramatma' in Sanskrit, are inadequate. Therefore, the Vedantins prefer to call Him Brahman, Purnam, Adwaita and Atman. Because, it is true that in this universe there cannot be one single God, and if there is a single God, He cannot be a small or a limited God. He must be infinite and eternal. And if He is infinite and eternal, how can our limited and finite mind understand Him?

So sometimes by reading the Upanishads one develops scepticism for the time being. Upanishads are easily understood by one who practises integral yoga, combining karma, bhakti, raja and jnana yogas together. If one practises the truth of the Upanishads with *Yoga*, knowledge comes to him without any confusion.

The whole Ishavasya Upanishad is divided into seven waves :

Mantra 1 is the first wave; mantra 2 is the second wave; mantra 3 is the third wave; fourth wave comprises mantras 4 to 8; the fifth wave mantras 9 to 14; the sixth wave mantras 15 to 17; and mantra 18 is the seventh wave.

FIRST WAVE

Mantra 1 :-

ॐ ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥१॥

**Ōm ēshāwāsyam īdam sarwam yatkiñcha jagatyām jagat,
téna tyakténa bhuñjēthā mā gridhah kasyaswīd dhanam. [1]**

Translation & Explanation:

"All this, whatsoever moves in this Universe, is indwelled by Isha: therefore, through renunciation do thou enjoy, and do not covet anybody's wealth."

In all books, Isha is explained as the Lord or God. But, the word Isha is derived from the root '*Ishan*', which means 'to rule, to govern or to conduct'. Therefore, *Isha* may be known as the Supreme Lord, or the Supreme Governor, or the Supreme Ruler, but not in the context of the gods of Hindus or of Christians. It should be understood as an all-pervading and all-governing essence.

The purpose of this mantra is to give proper guidance to misguided thinkers. It says that one should not covet other people's wealth, and at the same time, should enjoy life, with an attitude of 'tyaga' renunciation. Why? The logical argument is: 'because, everything in this Universe is pervaded by one '*Isha*'. There is one unifying and permeating and underlying essence as a common link. It is not different in you and me. There is oneness

of reality.' This is a new conception advanced by this Upanishad.

To know the reality, there are two paths : the path of yoga and the path of bhoga. The first, the path of yoga, goes through renunciation; and the second, the path of bhoga, goes through enjoyment of the objects of the world available to the senses. The usual conception is that by practising tyaga, or renunciation, one cannot enjoy the things of the world. And if one enjoys the things of the world, it is not possible to practise renunciation. It is believed that the spirit of renunciation and hankering for enjoyment cannot co-exist. This is the conclusive conception of many thinkers.

In this Upanishad, a clear-cut indication is given that hankering for worldly objects, gratification of sense desires, and at the same time, having the spirit of renunciation, side by side is *not* unachievable; in fact *it is possible*!

One Sanskrit text mentions, 'What is the fun of that *yoga*, which cannot be practised amidst sense enjoyments? What is the fun of getting a doctor home, if nobody is ill? Why go to a hospital when one is not sick?'

In the same manner, 'What is the fun in practising yoga, when one cannot enjoy?' Yoga is of no use, if it cannot be practised while one is living in the world of sense objects.

Either humanity was led by great prophets and saints (like Buddha and Christ) through the path of renunciation, or else the materialistic thinkers of East and West, like Shukra, Brihaspati, Vatsayanan, and the scientists, led humanity through the path of materialistic enjoyments.

Great Indian materialistic thinkers advocated materialistic enjoyments and wrote books on all subjects, including sexology. Great Shukracharya, Manu and Brihaspati, wrote books on economics, astrology and

other subjects. They laid stress on the point of worldly enjoyments, and suggested spiritual grafting also. It meant a compromise and an adjustment with spiritual things.

Great prophets, for example Mahavir, Buddha, Zarathustra, Christ, Mohammed, and thousands in this galaxy, wished to carry people through the narrow lane of renunciation. But, finally, the two paths, the path of pravritti and the path of nivritti were accepted. Pravritti is the path of action and enjoyment, and nivritti is the path of renunciation.

Those who wanted to taste materialistic pleasures of the world, to gratify their sense hankerings, accepted the path of action, or pravritti. One who never wanted to satisfy the hankerings of his senses advocated and followed the path of renunciation. As a result, from time immemorial, we find two distinct paths existing even to this day. Either one has to go through the path of renunciation or one has to choose the path of materialistic enjoyment.

Probably, it does not strike one, or maybe one does not believe that there could be a possibility of blending these twofold thoughts together. In this Upanishad, there is a hint, "*tena tyaktena bhunjitha*", which reveals the possibility of blending. "Therefore, through renunciation do thou enjoy what is enjoyable", is its statement. Enjoyment should be controlled by the spirit of renunciation. Renunciation does not mean complete extermination of enjoyment. Rather, it should be a controlled enjoyment. One may enjoy family life, property, name, power, position, learning, community, etc. with a spirit of detachment.

To blend pravritti and nivritti together is a very difficult task. In the Gita, there is an attempt to bring to the mind of the people that there is the possibility of a blending of these two opposite conceptions of life.

Then, is it possible to lead a life in the world controlled by the spirit of renunciation? If it can be done, the aim of the Upanishad is achieved.

The mantra also says, "Do not covet anybody's wealth." This is an instruction to the disciple, at the end of the Yajurveda.

There is an all-pervading essence, which the Upanishad names as *Isha*, but in reality it has no name at all. The supreme, underlying, all-pervading reality is nameless, formless, birthless, deathless, caste, creed and religionless.

In order to introduce that reality, a hypothetical name is to be given, and that name here is *Isha*. How does Isha pervade all things? Even as salt pervades and permeates every drop when mixed with water, and even as butter is immanent in every atom of milk, likewise life is permeating every atom of the physical body. Life pulsates and flows from the tip of the nails up to the head.

There is one cosmic force. It is not only energy. This cosmic force is permeating the whole universe. Much of it still remains unmanifested. A few manifestations are our solar system, our little and insignificant earth, etc. This force is unpredictable and inexpressible in mathematical language.

Even the great scientists have found that behind this energy there seems to be an irresistible and immutable force beyond understanding. With the present dimension of consciousness of man, the unknown force cannot be apprehended. It is the immutable force, which may be called the Lord of the universe, the essence of the universe. People name it God. It is *Ishwara* in Sanskrit and *Allah* in Islam.

An ordinary layman, incapable of thinking intellectually, always understands the Supreme Power as a personal God, like a king of a country. It is a very low,

insignificant and childish understanding of God. This is why the theory of God has often been exploded. Communism denies God. The subject of the real God is beyond speech. If communism has exploded the idea of God, it has exploded only the childish ideas of God, or the God of ignorant men and women, who have not an evolved dimension of consciousness. From morning until late at night, a man is busy and gets no time to think of anything else, except his own petty problems of the day. Where does he get time to think of whether a greater force exists? When has he got the time to ponder over the universal problems like philosophers and scientists? Man has no time. He knows only to get down from one train and jump into another. To reach home, he will catch a bus, step in the door, slip into bed. Next morning again he will repeat the same old routine of life.

Ignorant priests of every religion have been misguiding humanity. They are unable to guide properly. They have no right to preach God, unless they give enough time to find out the actual state of reality or the actual nature of the universe. Therefore, the onslaughts of communism on God is not because there is a God or there is no God. It is because the God which is put forth, needs to be destroyed. The ignorant and misleading conceptions should be wiped away.

The God of Vedanta, or a rishi, or a seer, is the supreme essence, the force, the cosmic energy, which does not seek your worship, and which does not want propitiation from you. Such a God, no communist can ever destroy. When it is said, '*Ishavasyam idam sarvam*', or 'all this is pervaded by Isha' it does not indicate a God in person.

God is force. *Satchidananda* is the right name and word to express the attributes of God. The cosmic force has threefold attributes. Just as the nature of sugar is

sweet, of water is liquid, and of stone is solid, in the same way, there are characteristics of that supreme essence. Those are known as '*sat-chit-ananda*'.

What is sat? *Sat* means 'existence' or 'beingness'. No atom or anything in the universe is devoid of cosmic and immutable force. That beingness is everywhere. *Sat* means 'that which exists'. The definition of *Sat* is: 'That which remains in all the three periods of time : past, present and future'. It does not cease to be even once. The opposite of *sat* is *asat*. *Asat* means 'that which is not'; in other words, 'the non-existent'.

The second chapter of the Gita says "*nasato vidyate bhavo nabhavo vidyate satah*". It means: "That which is non-existent, does not come into being; and that which is existent, never ceases to be." It is called *sat*, and it is everywhere. *Sat* is the essence of Creation.

In Chhandogya Upanishad there runs a beautiful dialogue between a Guru and his disciple, named Uddalak Aruni and Shvetketu, respectively :–

"Teach me the science of the Supreme Being that is beyond all names and forms. How was the manifestation processed to bring the Universe into existence?"

"If you go to the southern shore of the sea and taste?" The question was answered by a question.

"It will be saltish" replied Shvetketu.

"And if you go to the northern shore?"

"Same."

"And what will be the taste of water on the eastern and western shores and the middle-point of the sea?" the Guru asked.

"Full of salt," replied Shvetketu.

Then the Guru said, "Even as the salt is all-pervading in the sea, likewise the consciousness is ever existent in all the forms of the Universe."

That essence of all things and beings is called *Atma*. In individuals, it is known as *atma* or the self. Even as,

out of a gold piece, different ornaments are cast and yet the gold is not lost, but continues to exist with new name and form added to it, likewise, when this force converts and manifests, in the form of suns and stars, it never gets lost. It gets only new names and forms. Therefore, *sat* means 'that which is, was and shall never cease to exist'.

What is *chit*? Chitta means 'consciousness, or the supreme principle, or the force which is conscious.' A great scientist has tried to analyze the principle of consciousness, the motivating force. What is the motivating force behind that peculiar behavior of atoms? What is that force that decides the physical and natural law? After all, a law does exist. There seems to be a conscious movement behind the electrons and protons. The laws of physics are simply baffling when they are put to the test of logic. The scholars and scientists have come to know that there seems to be an intelligent agent or an intelligent principle behind the behavior of everything in this world, and that intelligent principle behind everything is called *chit*. '*Chit*' is different from '*chitta*'.

What is *ananda*? The third attribute of God is called *ananda*; *ananda* is also one of the characteristics of this Supreme Being. *Ananda* means 'expression, evolution, manifestation, development and springing-off'. Blooming or blossoming of the flowers is *ananda*. When the universe has come out, it is *ananda*, or the expression of the Supreme.

So, *sat-chit-ananda*; these are three characteristics of the supreme essence which is all-pervading.

Much could be said about that Supreme Being, but that is a subject matter for self-enquiry and meditation.

SECOND WAVE

Mantra 2:–

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतꣳ समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥२॥

Kurwannéwéha karmāṅī jījēwīshéchchhataṃ samāh,
éwam twayī nānyathétōōstī na karma līpyaté naré. [2]

Translation & Explanation:

"Let every man wish to live for a hundred years while performing karmas in this world. Thus, other than this, there is no way out for you; karmas do not bind the man."

In the first mantra, Ishavasya Upanishad points out and declares the supreme nature of the Truth and states that the whole Universe is indwelled by Isha. As such, every man should lead a noble life in a philosophical spirit.

The second mantra has an optimistic approach and nullifies the pessimistic tendencies of every man. Man has always felt from time immemorial that karmas cause samskaras, and thereafter they cause rebirth. Therefore, let a wise man renounce his karmas. Many great religious movements in the past have decried karmas and have shown the path of jnana to their followers. During the Vedic period in India, a flourishing philosophical and spiritual cult called

avadhuta used to carry the message of renunciation to the doors of the working man. Society, on one hand, demanded work in life, and yet to balance this the philosophical approach made by a thinking man developed a scheme of renunciation on the other side.

When Yajurveda came into existence, its philosophy flourished and became popular. During that period, people were eager to follow the path of *nivritti*, or the path of retirement from action. They went into the jungles to realize the Truth. This Upanishad is trying to correct the misconceived notions of the man of that time, and it has a message for the man of our time too, by advising, 'let every man wish to live for one hundred years, while performing all the duties and karmas in his life.'

Karmas:

The word *karmas* is used for daily activities pertaining to family, society and community. People think that for the attainment of final *mukti* or *jnana* or higher spiritual stages, one should dispense with the karmas, but the Ishavasya Upanishad says, 'there is no other way except to perform karmas'. Many philosophical texts maintain that for spiritual illumination, *karmas* play a very important part. They expel the instinctive and the animal nature of man. It is believed that, in the human structure, there exists an animal nature in the form of habits, manners, desires, instincts and unconscious trends. This animal in man can be expelled only by performing karmas. If karma is not practised by the spiritual aspirants in this light, the long-held suppressions will not get proper expression, and the personality will remain unintegrated. Therefore, for self-illumination karmas are a necessary and integral part of the process.

The Animal Nature in Man:

Generally, it is believed that we work for the sake of a nation, country or community. This is a materialistic belief. Spiritually, the great thinkers believe that karma is the expression of our nature. Of what nature? Of the lower nature. By doing karmas for a long time, the accumulated karmas are exhausted, the personality becomes more free to carry on with the higher schemes of spiritual life.

By self-analysis it is found that karma does not mean the simple daily routine or duties only. Every karma is motivated by the force of desire. Karma expresses our thoughts, desires and deep rooted ambitions, which otherwise would have remained embedded and dormant in the personality for a very long time.

If one believes that karma is a block or obstruction for the expression of the divine soul in him, it is all the more necessary to get rid of this block. Some believe that karma is the toxin of eternal life, called anadi vasana in Sanskrit, or the never-ending desires. Anadi vasana is a great barrier in the process of unfoldment of divinity within the self.

Karma is an expression of the dharma of indriyas. They are not only physical actions. Who knows what forces led me to take sannyas and to give lectures on Upanishads? It is not only the action or movement of my tongue or the action of my brain. Behind the actions there must be a series of incidents of my past life, which are coming forth together and expressing themselves in the form of this present action.

What are the forces that compel us to understand the lessons of yoga? Is it a brainwave, or an action, or a function of the eardrums? Behind the apparent, gross and physical personality of senses, body and mind, there are samskaras, which try to express themselves in the form of behavior, thoughts and actions.

Karmas are done in order to express them, otherwise they may lie buried in the depth of the consciousness. One may try his best to lead a spiritual life or to go through the strange and wild path of meditation, but he will not be able to do so at his will.

It is now understandable why the rishi of this Upanishad says to his disciple that 'Therefore, for him there is no other way than this'.

Who is that disciple? Surely not an ordinary worldly man, but one who has taken refuge at the feet of the Master, the Upanishadic Guru. The dialogue takes place between the Guru and his intimate disciple. Originally, it was not for the common masses. So, even for an intelligent, enlightened and aspiring disciple, karmas are essential. The Upanishad brings us one truth: spiritually illumined people never decry karmas. Though karmas cause frustration, exhaustion, asakti, passion, greed and everything, but even then, they should not be decried.

Many sects like Buddhists and Jains decry karmas. But, this Upanishad says 'No, don't decry.' For higher emancipation there is no way other than karma. The great ancient Guru Dattatreya maintained that the path of renunciation is like the passage of a bird capable of flying. It is only for those who have strong wings, to fly from one peak of a mountain to another.

The path of action is like the path of an ant. It is for those who have no wings and capacity to fly. For them is the way of karma– a path which is slow but steady and sure. The path of karma takes time.

Karma loses its meaning for those who are free from the fear of death, and do not care for anything of this world. The nivritti marga, or the path of renunciation, is the best to give to them. Renunciation is for the brave, and not for the weak in flesh and mind.

People full of desire and subject to ethical moral, social and physical limitations, should follow the path of karma marga.

So, the Upanishad maintains that the karma marga is for the majority of the people, while the jnana marga is open only to the privileged few.

Karmas do bind a man. When a karma is done, it creates influence, impressions and samskaras. These impressions are carried to the subconscious mind and the subtle body, the sukshma sharira. From there, they again accumulate into the causal body, the karana sharira, and become samskaras, which are the accumulated seeds of actions. These accumulated actions try to find expression in this life and other lives of a man one by one. When, according to the time, gravity and prominence, karmas play a great part in an individual's life, they are called prarabdha or destiny.

Karmas, as a whole, are divided into categories: (1) sanchit karma; (2) kriyamana karma and (3) prarabdha karma.

The karmas that are in stock are called *sanchit karmas*, the accumulated actions; the karmas, which we are doing today are called *kriyamana karmas*, or current karmas and the karmas which have started bearing fruits– sweet, bitter or mixed, are called *prarabdha* or destiny.

Suppose, a farmer has a seed-godown. He takes out a few seeds in season and harvests them in time. After the harvest he again deposits some more seeds to the stock and continues to do so again and again every year.

Karma indeed binds a man to its fruits. However, the method to exhaust them is renunciation and desirelessness, tyaga and anasakti. It is the philosophical and rational method which was evolved in India through the Gita and other scriptures.

The Gita explains that even if you do not do karma physically, your mind will remain active, it is also karma. So, the Upanishad says that it is better, then, for a common man to wish to live as long as possible while doing his respective duties. If he thinks that karmas will bind him, it is not so. There is a special way by which he can be free from the clutches of karma.

In the Upanishads, the conception of karmas is twofold : (1) karmas done for one's own self and (2) karmas done for others.

When karmas are done for the sake of others they are known as Brahma karma, or the noble, or the higher karmas. The higher karmas do not bind a man. Therefore, one has to do karma in such a way that it does good to others and is also conducive to his own happiness. The usual approach in the world is, that whatever one does, it should bring good to him alone. Very often one does not care whether it is good for others also.

The Upanishadic approach is, one must think in the context of a large number of people. Karmas should bring benefit to a large community, as also to the individual self. Therefore, the karmas which are beneficial to the society and the individual, never bind a man. They do not cause samskaras and do not form bad habits. No complex of any kind is developed and the man remains free.

THIRD WAVE

Mantra 3:–

असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः ।
ताँस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥३॥

Asuryā nāma té lōkā andhéna tamasā āvritāh,
tāmsté prétyābhīgachchhantī yé ké chātmahanō janāh. [3]

Translation & Explanation:

"There are worlds covered with blinding darkness. They are known as sunless worlds. The killers of the self depart to these worlds."

This mantra has two explanations– the orthodox and the esoteric.

There are the worlds where there is blinding darkness all around. They are demonic, full of devils and demons. People who commit suicide go to these worlds of blinding darkness after death. This is an orthodox interpretation.

I personally do not find anything wrong with this interpretation. Those people who are frustrated in life commit suicide and their souls enter into a path of darkness. But, in the context and spirit of this Upanishad, this interpretation seems to be out of place. This Upanishad is solely devoted to the knowledge of the Self. The topic of the soul's journey, after committing suicide, seems to be irrelevant. Therefore, though the

interpretation is correct, it is different from the Upanishadic interpretation.

Apart from this plane of sense consciousness, where we are able to see things and comprehend objects through respective sense organs, there are other planes of consciousness also. They are the lower planes of consciousness.

In yoga, we talk about the higher and the subtler planes of consciousness, such as the consciousness of the sukshma and karana bodies, or the consciousness of the Bhuloka, Bhuvahloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka, etc. There are seven higher worlds or planes of consciousness. These are popularly known as the seven Heavens, or the seven planes of individual consciousness.

By spiritual practices or any other method, an individual soul can be raised to higher states of evolution, and by certain acts of evil, a soul can be put down in the abyss of lower consciousness.

There are seven higher and seven lower planes of consciousness. In all, there are fourteen worlds. Seven belong to the higher spiritual and evolutionary process of consciousness. The other seven lower planes belong to the material consciousness.

These worlds are the subtle and the gross planes of consciousness. They are marked by the presence and absence of light and awareness. While going up, there is more and more light, awareness, peace and strength. When coming down, there is experience of darkness, devoid of illumination, on the lower planes.

The higher worlds are with light, and the lower ones without light. This Upanishad uses the word *asurya*. It means, the planes of consciousness devoid of sun or light. What is sun? The word *asurya* means 'without sun'. It indicates absence of different faculties of consciousness able to enlighten different objects.

Mind is able to enlighten the objects in the form of a book in front of the eyes. Mind is able to enlighten or throw light on the sounds received through ears. So, when the buddhi and the mind throw light, different objects become perceptible to the indriyas. In the absence of light of buddhi and mind, indriyas can never perceive any object. Similarly, when consciousness goes to lower planes, there is absence of the light. The light of buddhi and mind are not there.

What is the driving force of awareness or consciousness? In Sanskrit it is called *swabhava*. It is by swabhava, or one's own innate nature, that a man sees, hears, or acts or does not do anything. In the higher worlds, whatever a man does is under full control of consciousness.

In the lower worlds, man acts under compulsion of instinct and is under the drive of swabhava. There is no sun, means there is no buddhi or mind. The lower planes of awareness are covered with extraordinary blinding darkness. One cannot feel direction, whether it is north, south, east, or west. Due to extreme darkness, the individual loses the sense of time and place. One experiences this in meditation and dreams or after death.

The word consciousness lays open a different phase of human life. The consciousness undergoes a different process of evolution, and remains the same in all the incarnations.

In India, we are aware of the two paths, which the soul follows after death :-

(1) the path of devas, called *devayan*: (*yan- path*); and
(2) the path of the ancestors, called *pitriyana*.

In spiritual people, after death or in meditation, their awareness passes through the path of devas. The path of devas is full of illumination and light. In the case of those engrossed in material things, after

death or during meditation their awareness passes through the path of pitris.

Gita also mentions two paths: one goes through the south and the other through the north. One goes through sushumna and the other through ida and pingala. These are all passages of consciousness. Through the passage of sushumna or ida and pingala, the consciousness goes up and down. Through ida and pingala, it passes through a dark period or a dark night. Therefore, the Upanishad says, "The slayers of the body, after departure, pass through the blinding darkness or sunless worlds."

The rishi of this Upanishad feels, that a person should either be useful and noble for himself, or should contribute something good to others. If he does not fulfil his obligations to himself or to society, he has wasted his life. Such a person, in the Upanishads, is called *tamaghati*, or 'the one who commits suicide'.

Atmaghat– spiritual suicide. Human life is precious and is full of promises. A human body is a rare gift of nature. Only the human mind has the capability to permeate, combine and even think about the creator of the world.

With such tremendous intelligence and capacity, man is made in the image of God Himself. And if man, with all his capacities and faculties at his command is making himself neither useful to himself nor to others, what a pity!

What will man do if he is not serving himself nor society? He will commit crimes or will waste his life in idle thinking and mischievous actions. Such people are '*atmahano janah*'; the killers of the self. *Atma* or the Self must either be restored to its original status, where it was before coming down, or the individualised self must climb up. Man neither maintains the original glory of his consciousness nor allows the degenerated

consciousness to go high. What will happen? Self will be annihilated completely and that is called the destruction of the Self or the spiritual suicide of the aspirant.

According to the great thinker Shankaracharya, consciousness should be developed to the superlative degree, during meditation and wakefulness. When one comes up to a stage in sadhana, the inner consciousness is changed by conscious and voluntary efforts. The indriyas and the mind retain their normal spheres of consciousness, but the subconscious and the unconscious spheres of personality are changed.

For an aspirant, it is not necessary to evolve through meditation only. He can correct, formulate and affect the reorientation of inner personality even while working in the world. Within one's own self, without his knowledge, change is taking place all the while. One thinks hundreds of thoughts at a time, which formulate different channels in the consciousness. A number of times consciousness goes high and a number of times it comes down to fall in the abyss.

A wise man understands this truth and decides not to waste his life. *Atmahana* in this context means those who waste their lives and wonderful faculties of mind. Those who are unable to utilize the talents available to them in the form of mind and buddhi only kill their own soul. Such people are self-killers.

It seems that the paths of jnana and karma should be followed together. Those who do not follow the path of either jnana or karma, undergo a process of retardation. Their consciousness is thrown back to the lower planes of awareness.

FOURTH WAVE

Mantra 4–:

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो
नैनद्देवा आप्नुवन्पूर्वमर्षत् ।
तद्धावतोऽन्यानत्येति तिष्ठत्त-
स्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति ।।४।।

Anéjadékaṁ manasō jawēyō
nánaddévā āpnuwan pūrwamarshat,
taddhāwatōōnyāna tyétī tīshthat
tasmīnnapō mātarīshwā dadhātī [4]

Translation & Explanation:

With this mantra the fourth wave of thought starts. The mantra says, "Atma is motionless, but it is swifter than the mind. Senses can never overtake it. It runs ahead of them. While sitting, it goes faster than those who run after it. In this Atma, the individual soul places the karmas".

The glamorous ritualistic and theological part of the Vedas gives only a glimpse of God and confines the conception of the Supreme Being to finite expressions and definitions. The religions of the world of today and yesterday, including Yajurveda, sing the praises and glories of God. They pay tribute to the finite expressions of the Divine Being. Sometimes, to a layman, it appears that God is a man or a finite being

who took birth. And therefore, a communist will say that God is dead. This kind of illogical, unsystematic and unphilosophical, yet theological approach to the supreme knowledge creates a lot of confusion about God, even in our minds.

Many who study the science of yoga sincerely should be careful in their belief in God. They have to analyze carefully, whether what they believe is true, or whether they believe simply because they have been asked and taught to believe in it by society. Sometimes, nobody teaches about God, and yet we learn it. Sometimes, without knowing much about God, some people profess and preach. Therefore, one who wants to pursue the path of God-realization should be clear in his mind that even if his mind is unable to have a complete understanding and knowledge of God, intellectually he can at least know that 'God is not this', or is indeed not what they were thinking of.

Once, while I was a boy, I had been to my village in the Himalaya mountains during my vacation. It was perhaps a Tuesday. My grandmother asked me to take flowers and a little oil to the temple, and to perform some ceremonies.

"What for?" I asked.

"To worship God", she said.

"But, I do not believe in that God" I retorted.

"You do not believe in God?" She exclaimed.

"I do believe in God, but not in the God you believe in," I said.

She did not understand. She thought perhaps that her God was Universal God, and it was only a boy who was trying to challenge that her God was the Universal One.

I said further, "I believe in God, but not in the God you believe in; nor do I want that you should begin to believe in the God I believe in."

I do not say, the God I believe in is the ultimate definition of God. I want to change, and therefore, I have always been changing the definition of God, year after year. When I took sannyas I had a different view, and now I have a different one. This Upanishad is also trying to teach the same thing.

The Upanishads do not say what the ultimate reality is. They say what the ultimate reality should be, after going through all the processes of ordinary thinking, contemplation and reflection. An enquiring mind always tries to snatch a little time from his materialistic pursuits, to dive deep into the mysteries of life. He thinks about death, transmigration, continuity and survival of the soul. I think, the conception of God should be purified by dropping away all the sectarian and biased notions.

The first mantra informed us that *Isha* is indwelling in the whole Universe. Now, the fourth mantra tells us to rend asunder the misunderstandings about God, which are prevalent in society. Sometimes, our conception of God is so hopeless that a thinking man is apt to laugh at it. We have many childish conceptions about God. It is like all the young children playing in the village with little idols and celebrating their marriage, tea-party, procession, etc.

Whatever conception of God one may have in his heart, he is not required to shake it off. But, at the same time, it would be better to discover the truth further, like a free-minded scientist, philosopher or an enquirer. One has to be an open-minded philosopher. Without closing the doors of his mind, he should try to know and accept more, and get further enlightenment on the subject. He should not think, that this is the ultimate form of God. All theological sects have closed their doors to further knowledge. So, it is essential to understand the real aspect of the Supreme Being.

Ekam or 'One' is the qualification of the Supreme Purusha. The literal and recognized meaning of *deva* is God, but it is different in the Upanishads where this word *deva* is very often used for the senses or the indriyas. It is derived from the basic root '*byuta*', which means 'to shine' or 'to illumine'. Since indriyas are responsible for perception or for illumining an object, they are called 'the illumining ones', or the devas. Eyes illumine an object and ears enable us to hear a sound.

What is that *Purusha* or *Atma* about which the mantra speaks? Atma is a mysterious and invisible force beyond the conceptions of the human mind. It is, therefore, maintained by the Upanishad that *devas* or the senses cannot overtake it. Atma is far beyond the grasp of sense perceptions. It is an established truth of philosophy that the higher reality or the cosmic force is not a subject of sense perception.

Even yogis who meditate on the Self, with the help of mind and indriyas, find it difficult to comprehend the subtle and the infinite truth, with finite sense faculties of perception, which are an imperfect vehicle of knowledge.

Philosophers proclaim that the power of the senses exhausts itself after a particular point. It appears a limit has been set to them. Therefore, the devas or the senses cannot overtake or reach that Supreme *Atma*. The Supreme Being is One, and one denotes infinity. In Buddhist and Hindu scriptures, Buddha or the rishis have tried to avoid the subject of definition of the Supreme One.

'The ultimate reality is shunya', maintain the Upanishads. *Shunya* means zero or a cipher, which is a symbol of the infinite and *not* a symbol of 'no value'. Some of the thinkers thought that the supreme reality should be spoken of as shunya, and not as one. Because when you say, 'God is One', you think of One as the

limited one, although it is used only for the Infinite One, for One, who has no second or third. That ONE is Adwaita, or the Non-Dual.

The Supreme One or Self is swifter than the mind. The self is not confined to space, or a period of time, or to a limited condition; while mind is always conditioned. Atma or Self is unmoving and stationary, but the mind is subject to change and motion.

The rishi of the Upanishad says, 'In this Atma, the individual soul places his karma after death'. The sthula sharira or the gross body is buried or burnt, or disposed of, but the sukshma sharira or the subtle body, composed of 5 karma indriyas, 5 jnana indriyas, 5 pranas, 4 faculties of antahkarana and one atma, leaves the body. The individual soul or atma is the conscious agency of life. It is unfluctuating, unceasing and constant awareness in all lives. This supreme awareness takes care of sukshma sharira, which is a bundle of karmas and past impressions. That sukshma sharira is placed over the causal body, like passengers placed in a bus.

After the destruction of the annamaya body, the anandamaya, along with vijnanamaya, and manomaya, is reduced to the finest form. When all koshas or bodies are reduced to the finest form, the awareness of the individual soul, called jivatma, places karma on the anandamaya kosha. This process occurs after the death of the physical body. This is the philosophy of transmigration.

Thus, the karmas keep on multiplying or getting less, life after life.

Mantra 5 :–

तदेजति तन्नैजति तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके ।
तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥५॥

Tadéjatī tannájatī taddūré tadwantiké.
tadantarasya sarwasya tadu sarwasyāsya bāhyatah. [5]

Translation & Explanation:

"That moves on and does not move. It is far and near. It is inside and outside of all. It is all, and *it is all.*"

According to this Upanishad, the Self is infinite, beyond all scopes of gross perception. The second half of this mantra says that the Atma is inside and outside of all. Its being inside of all indicates its power of immanence, and when it is said that it is outside of all, it becomes the power of transcendence. Certain schools of philosophy believe that the supreme reality is all-pervading, immanent and transcendent.

Butter is immanent in milk, but it is not to be found outside milk. So, it has limitations. The salt is immanent in sea-water, but it is not outside the sea-water. So, it is only immanent and not transcendent. In the same manner, the supreme reality, about which the Upanishad speaks, is not only pervading the manifest and the nonmanifest universe; it is something beyond the immanence also. A particular school of thought called Pantheism believes that the Universe is God. But the Upanishad says that supreme reality, the Atma or the Paramatma, or the supreme consciousness, is not only immanent but also transcendent.

In Brihadaranyak Upanishad, a discussion took place between Yagyavalkya and a great Brahmin.

The Brahmin rose up in the court of King Janaka and asked, "Oh, Yagyavalkya, can you tell me how many gods are mentioned in the list of Vedas?"

"Three thousand, three hundred and thirty six", Yagyavalkya replied.

Then, the Brahmin asked, "But, tell me, how many gods are there?"

"Three hundred and thirty six," he said.

"No, I ask you what exactly is the truth about the number of gods," the Brahmin asked again.

"Eight," now Yagyavalkya replied.

The Brahmin did not keep quiet and asked further, "No, I want you to tell me the real number of gods".

"Three", he said.

The Brahmin was still not satisfied and insisted, "Tell me the truth."

"Alright, one and a half," came the answer.

"Then, if it is one and a half what are all these 3336?" The Brahmin enquired further.

"These are the glories and manifestations," Yagyavalkya replied.

"What is this one and a half?" The Brahmin then enquired.

"One is immanent, and the half is transcendent," was Yagyavalkya's reply.

This is the Pantheistic philosophy of India, put forth in the form of a story.

That is how the whole thing is to be understood. I do not consider it to be true arithmetically that immanence is one and transcendence is half. Immanence and transcendence both are within the scope of infinity, and infinity is ONE. To make it more intelligible to the mind of an ordinary man, this Supreme Being, or the Soul, is the pervading force in all the vyakta and avyakta, in the manifested and in the unmanifested, in both seen and unseen universe. There is some force which is beyond the scope of all. We do not know how much or how many it is. Therefore, one and a half does not mean a mathematical calculation of the Supreme. It means, the Transcendent One, about which we know only half of the truth, and *not* the truth as a whole. What is this One? This is the conceptual reality– a reality which we have been able to conceive both in this manifest and the unmanifest universe.

So, these lines of the mantra mean to say, 'This Atma in you, is the microcosmic reality. It is immanent and at the same time transcendent too.' Even if one is able to know about the vyakta and the avyakta, and claims that he has known Him, it is not correct. One has not known Him, because He is not only that much. Therefore, the transcendental aspect of Brahman or Parabrahman, or the Cosmic Being, is indicated in the Upanishad by the word '*neti, neti,*' *or* '*na-iti, na-iti*', which means, 'not only this much; not only this much.'

The transcendental aspect is beyond all dimensions of perception, cognition and knowledge. The rishis of Brihadaranyak and other Upanishads have proclaimed that the supreme reality has an immanent and an all-pervading aspect.

Transcendental means where concept, imagination, supreme experience and even the cosmic experience, cannot penetrate. To understand and explain the transcendental, there is a particular terminology in Sanskrit spelled out as paratpara, which means 'beyond the beyond.' Avyakta is beyond, but the transcendental, or paratpara, is 'beyond the beyond'. So, this particular aspect of the transcendental is beyond all explanations.

Other Upanishads explain it thus:

"Yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha, anandam Brahmano vidwan na vibheti kutaschaneti."

It means, "From where the speech returns along with the mind, *not* having found Him." This is a declaration of the Upanishads. Not only the speech alone, but even the mind cannot penetrate beyond a certain range of knowledge. It is the ultimate content of all the Upanishads. Up to the first stage of samadhi (vitarka samadhi), one can approach through the power of logic and reasoning, although this is very difficult. Only a few can comprehend that reality. But, beyond that is a subject of inner experience alone.

Unless one has burnt the samskaras, and attained the clear state of nirbeeja samadhi, there is no possibility of maintaining the transcendental state. The 'live' samskaras will direct the aspirant either deeper in, to (vichara samprajnata) samadhi or back out to the external world. The experience of the intermediary asamprajnata stage is like clearing the ground for nirbeeja samadhi. The gardener investigates the remaining seeds (samskaras), cultivating those required and discarding the rest, either through sadhana or by manifesting them, that is, working them out, in the physical world. Nirbeeja is where there are no seeds left.

The transcendental aspect of supreme Brahman appears to be a great force with three aspects. One is the manifested universe, second is the unmanifest and beyond, and the third is 'beyond the beyond'. There may be a fourth aspect also, about which no one has the least idea. The Upanishad also finds it difficult to speak about that fourth stage of the supreme reality. It is absolutely unknowable and unknown.

So, about this transcendental reality, we can say that it is a subject of anubhuti, or anubhava or indirect perception. It is known as the aparokshanubhuti, or 'the indirect perception'. It is a kind of perception, not through the senses, but through samadhi. It is only in the nirvikalpa samadhi, that the transcendental experience takes place. What is that transcendental experience like? It is known as *kaivalya*, or the 'absolute'. The immanent aspect of the Supreme Being is subject to conditions, though it is not really conditioned, but only appears to be conditioned. How?

Suppose, a train is standing still, and the other one is moving fast. Passengers of the first train think that their train is moving and the other train is standing still. This is called conditioning. Although the first

train is not moving, to others it seems to be moving. And, the other train is moving, but because the trees are not moving, it appears to those inside that the train is standing still, and the trees are moving. One comes across these experiences every day.

There is another example. When you participate in a merry-go-round, you feel after some time that the whole world is revolving around. This is called relative conditioning. In the same manner, the aspect of the Supreme Consciousness, which is immanent, untainted, untouched and param pavitra (holy and sacred), appears to be subjected to the motion of the body, mind and senses. When the body dies, it appears that the soul is dead, although it does not die because of its immanence.

Another illustration will explain it. Suppose there is a tree. There are two birds on it, one on the top and the other at the bottom. The bird on the top of the tree is quiet, and the bird at the bottom of the tree keeps on eating fruits and finds them tasty and delicious. When it finishes the fruits of one tree, it flies off to another tree. The other bird also follows. The lower bird finds the next tree also full of delicious fruits and enjoys them, and goes to a third tree afterwards. The upper bird follows. The lower bird finds the fruits of the first and second tree sweet, but the fruits of the third tree are bitter. It throws them off and goes to the next, finding sweet and bitter, bitter and sweet fruits simultaneously. It asks the upper bird also to share in the enjoyments and the sufferings of the sweet and bitter fruits. But the upper bird does not eat, and only keeps on following the lower. Ultimately, on one of the trees, as soon as the lower bird tasted the fruit, it vomited and fainted and fell down.

The upper bird was sitting up quietly. At the root of the tree there was a hunter. He shot the upper bird down.

This story is to convey the idea that the immanent aspect of Supreme Being does not suffer at all, but it appears as if it is also undergoing suffering, because it follows the lower bodies, like the upper bird who followed the lower. The Atma does not die, but appears to die to others. Therefore, the Supreme Atma is only apparently subjected to the condition of the body, mind and senses.

As far as the transcendental aspect of reality is concerned, there is no doubt that it is beyond all suffering. When the spiritual aspirant or the yogi withdraws his mind from the objective universe and looks within to perceive the immanent soul, he goes into samadhi, and experiences transcendental reality. Then he is able to transcend the conditions of time and space.

So immanent and transcendental aspects of reality are spoken of in this mantra. At the same time, it is said that the immanent aspect of reality is subject to time. It appears that it is moving, and it appears that it is not moving at all.

In the Upanishads and Vedanta, it is a tradition that any idea that is prominent or important will be repeated twice. For instance, '*ya evam veda; ya evam veda*'. It means that the statement they have made is a very important one.

Mantra 6:–

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥६॥

Yastu sarwāṅī bhūtānyātmanyéwa anupashyatī,
sarwabhūtéshu chātmānaṁ tatō na wījugupsaté. [6]

Translation & Explanation:

"He who constantly sees all beings in the higher Self or in the spiritual consciousness, does neither shrink nor does he hate."

Atma jnana, or the knowledge of the Self, is not a process of thinking alone, although jnana yogis employ the process of manan and chintan : 'thinking' and 'contemplation'. The Upanishad maintains that during the spiritual awareness in samadhi or Atma jnana, the intellectual process of equating entire things within the Self is not possible. In the field of higher consciousness there is only awareness of the Self. A siddha or a yogi, when he attains this stage, sees everything within.

The experience is similar to the cosmic vision of Arjuna in the battlefield. Only for a moment, the physical veil was removed by the spiritual power of Krishna, the preceptor. As a result, Arjuna saw within himself the entire cosmos, its creation and destruction. It happened within the twinkling of an eye. It was the microcosmic realization of the macrocosmos.

It is often said, 'As is in the macrocosmos; so is it in the microcosmos'. Microscopic processes, physical or supraphysical, are exactly the same as they are in the macrocosmos. Like space outside, there is intramolecular space within the structure of an atom also.

Mathematical similarities and equations are found in atoms. In the view of eminent scientists, the outside space is within the framework of atoms. In the same manner, the ancient scriptures say, "*yatha Brahmande tatha pindande*", meaning, "as it is in the macrocosmos, the same is in the body too". Within the body and behind the body, there is a vast field of awareness. In that vast field of awareness, everything is in the miniature form.

A particular vision is attained by a spiritual seeker. Usually, in jnana yoga the process of Atma jnana is followed by a system of reasoning, logical argument and contemplation. There the nature of Atma is investigated though the mind, intellect and pure reasoning. The Upanishad mentions clearly, that in the higher sphere the

aspirant should see the vision of the whole cosmos. There is a vision, an awareness, of virat swarup, or the cosmic Purusha. That virat swarup is the cosmic vision. It should be attained by the practitioner during the deep stage of meditation.

If the yogi has seen the whole creation in its miniature form, during the deep state of his meditational consciousness, he shall also see in the world, when he comes out of that meditation, the projection of his higher consciousness in all the beings outside. He will feel as if he is pervading all beings in a miniature form. It is really difficult to understand, because we have never attempted to reach the Supreme Being through a right and appropriate process. Usually, most of the spiritual aspirants are engaged in understanding the supreme reality only through the process of intellect, and the Upanishad says, that this Atma is unobtainable by the intellect.

The supreme consciousness can be maintained, neither through weak will, nor by sharp intellect; neither by hearing a lot about it from reliable sources, nor by reading a lot.

It is also said that the higher state of consciousness can be taught only by one process, and that is the continued process of meditation. In meditation the self is able to project itself, and therefore, a seer does not hate. '*Tatona wijugupsate*'. When a great yogi is able to project his higher consciousness in all beings, there is no shrinking in the form of hate or dislike. Why does the consciousness of a realized man not shrink? There are two processes: the recession and expansion of consciousness. It is also known as ascent and descent of kundalini.

During the process of ascent, the extended external consciousness shrinks and becomes one-pointed. At that point the entire universe is seen in the form of a vision. The vision is of the miniature world, within one's own

self. When the centralized and one-pointed consciousness starts expanding again, it is called the descent of kundalini, or the descent of power. In kundalini yoga the ascent of kundalini is from mooladhara to sahasrara, and the descent is from sahasrara to mooladhara.

When the one-pointed and unified consciousness expands, it is known as *param chetana*. It expands, like love. It increases every moment. Its expansion can be felt everywhere. In the embrace of that expanding consciousness, the yogi accepts everything without exception, and makes no distinction in any creature. And therefore he does not hate anyone. His consciousness never shrinks, and remains ever expanded. This sense is conveyed in the words '*na wijugupsata*'.

A jnani or a realized man is above social canons, because they are not eternal canons or eternal dharma.

The receding consciousness goes deep from dharana to dhyana, and from dhyana through the four stages of vitarka, vichara, ananda and asmita sabeeja samprajnat samadhi, and culminates into nirbeeja samadhi.

When consciousness recedes to the ultimate point, one sees the whole cosmos in a miniature form.

When he has seen the cosmic form of the purusha or the Creator, his spiritual consciousness starts expanding again, like ice turning into water once more.

When kundalini awakens it goes up to sahasrara and meets Shiva. There it drinks the nectar and sheds off poison. Then, the poisonless kundalini comes down to mooladhara, the earthly plane of consciousness. It is then full of amritam. It means attainment and expansion of power.

In this mantra, Atma is equated to asmita samprajnat samadhi. Atma is not a personal being, nor is it a philosophical principle. Atma has neither

attributes, nor is it attributeless. It is a state of consciousness of the highest state, where the beeja or the seed, or the samskaras, are about to be shed off. The dynamism of individual consciousness still remains because individuality is not finished. The highest point of consciousness in man is called Atma.

When you sit alone and want to think of Atma, do not think of it as something in the heart or head or leg, or in any part of the body. It is a state of consciousness beyond body, mind and senses. One can, of course, reach that state of consciousness. It is not a person or a being. It is not a point, or a process, or an object of knowledge. It is the semi-final point of 'chitta vritti nirodha.' Kenopanishad speaks about the Atma in detail.

Mantra 7:–

यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ।।७।।

Yasmīn sarwāṅī bhūtānyātmáwa abhūdwījānatah,
tatra kō mōhah kah shōka ékatwam anupashyatah. [7]

Translation & Explanation:

"When all beings become one in one's own higher consciousness, then, what delusion and what grief is there for one who is constantly seeing oneness?"

It has already been stated that the consciousness has two ways to move. The first stage of movement is of a sadhak who tries to unify his consciousness. In the second stage, after the unification of consciousness, there is a process of expansion of consciousness. When the consciousness of a realized sage or sadhak expands and envelops everything of this world, he remains no more immersed in samadhi. His expanded consciousness is visible during the normal period of his life. He becomes

like a drunken man, whose hangover continues even after the intoxicated state.

The Upanishad says that there is a difference between the ordinary man and a great sage. An ordinary man identifies himself with the world and the sense objects. The sage works in the world retaining his higher consciousness.

The expanded consciousness of a sage functions overwhelmingly through the body and the senses, without attachment and without raga and dwesha.

For a jivanmukta it is definitely possible to work through the body and the senses in the world and for the world, without attachment. Logically, it seems difficult. There is a technique to bring down the higher consciousness to the lower plane of senses, retaining its original nature. The light of higher consciousness does not descend on earth like sunbeams. There is a special method by which a sadhak can bring down that higher consciousness from heaven to earth or from the higher state of samadhi to a lower level of senses and objective perception.

The Upanishad says, that when it becomes a fact that oneness is perceived everywhere, and the aspirant is successful in bringing down higher consciousness on earth he is not at all struck by grief and delusion. People are struck by delusion and grief only when they have not attuned their consciousness with the higher one, or are not able to bring the higher consciousness down to the level of earth.

The cause for delusion and grief is avidya, dwaita or the sense of duality. Delusion and grief take place in the lower self when the individual is moving in the world of senses. When once he learns to transcend the planes of normal consciousness, he begins to blossom into the higher sphere of consciousness. His valuation of delusion and grief is completely changed.

Great sages are capable of bringing the higher or supramental power down on earth, which manifests in work. They are never struck by delusion and grief, though they move in the world of duality amidst likes and dislikes. A jnani or a yogi has to live in this world, expressed as pairs of opposites. One can never be completely happy. If one is materially happy, he is unhappy mentally. One who is mentally happy is unhappy materially. Something or other makes everyone sorrowful and creates delusions in day to day life. Therefore, moha and shoka follow the individual like a shadow, wherever he goes. In any incarnation, maybe high or low, rich or poor, sophisticated or unsophisticated, literate or illiterate, educated or uneducated, not a single soul has ever been free from moha and shoka.

There is only one way to be free from moha and shoka. It is by jnana yoga, *not* by viveka. Delusion, or the eternal spiritual confusion and grief, is a mental stage and can be removed only by developing the consciousness to a high degree. The supernatural power is not going to descend on earth, like the rays of the sun, or like a shower or a rainbow. The descent of higher power is internal, and not an external supernatural event. It takes place within and is expressed through actions.

Mantra 8 :-

स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रणमस्नाविर्ँ
शुद्धमपापविद्धम् ।
कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयम्भूर्याथातथ्यतो-
ऽर्थान् व्यदधाच्छाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ॥८॥

Sa paryagāchchhukram akāyam avraṇam asnāwīraṃ
shuddham apāpawīddham,
kawīrmanēshē parībhūh swayambhūr yāthātathyatō
ōrthān vyadadhāt shāshwatēbhyah samābhyah. [8]

Translation & Explanation:

"He is all-pervading, bright, bodiless and unscathed. He has no muscles. He is pure and sinless. The wise ones say, He is omniscient and Self-born. He is functioning everywhere since eternity."

It is a description of the experience of a higher state of consciousness, or of Atma in samadhi. It is a description advanced by a negative approach, saying 'not this'. The higher consciousness of samadhi is all-pervading, immanent in all spheres of consciousness, namely annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya.

The experience of supreme consciousness is never dark, but has always the idea of brightness.

Atma should not be mistaken for a man, or for a holy being. The text of this Upanishad declares that it is akayam or bodiless. The physical body is not the body of Atma, because Atma has no body. It is '*awranam*' or scarless and scatheless. It has no fat and no muscles. It is not smoky. It is only consciousness. It is bright and pure. When the pure consciousness emerges, lower consciousness of the senses disappears. So, it is called *shuddham*, because not even an iota of lower consciousness is mixed with it. Memories and manipulations of lower physical and mental life do not pierce into the highest consciousness. Grief, sorrow, evil and pain do not reach here.

The most important and supreme aspect of it is the state of wisdom. It is a state of omniscience, and transcendence. It is impossible to comprehend It while living and working in the sensory universe. It is therefore very often said, that Atma is not a subject of discussion.

Atma is also Self-born. This power in man is the microcosmic universal self, responsible for allotting, fixing, giving or distributing the respective functions to

all. Since eternity this consciousness has been working out through birth and death. Everything functions in a perfect order due to that consciousness which resides in the body. It directs all functions of life, destiny, action, thought, emotion, etc. The individual is guided not by mind or buddhi or gunas alone; finally, everything is guided by the Supreme Self. That Self is beyond the conception of earthly consciousness. This is the swarupa, or form of that Atma.

FIFTH WAVE

Mantra 9:–

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्याया ँ रताः ।।९।।

Andhan tamah prawīshantī yééwīdyāmupāsaté,
tatō bhūya īwa té tamō ya u wīdyāyāṃ ratāh. (9)

Translation & Explanation:

"Those who follow the path of avidya, enter into blinding darkness. More than that, those who are engrossed in vidya, also enter in the great blinding darkness."

The new wave of thought begins with this mantra. The Vedas maintain that by karma or by ritualistic or selfless action, one can attain peace and higher spheres of spiritual life. Other thinkers announce, that by meditation alone one can attain the higher spheres of consciousness.

But, the rishi of the mantra announces that neither by meditation alone nor only by karma can one attain light. Those who follow the path of karma alone, miss the luminous sphere of life. And those who go only through meditation, disregarding karmas, they also miss the light.

Avidya means ritualistic karma, and vidya means spiritual light. Elsewhere, avidya means absence of

knowledge, and vidya means knowledge. But there, the word vidya is used for the knowledge pertaining to the Supreme. Likewise, avidya is knowledge of worldly objects.

Mundaka Upanishad gives a definition of both vidya and avidya in detail. According to that, vidya is that process of learning which enables us to know the imperishable– the Spiritual Consciousness. And avidya means knowledge of the world. To follow avidya means to follow the path of karma in relation to objects of the world, society, community and life. It should not be equated with ignorance, though usually, this word is used for absence of knowledge or ignorance.

Vidya is really the path of meditation, but it is interpreted by people as knowledge. The meaning of '*vid*' is 'to know the truth'. In the Upanishads, the word vidya is used for meditation, i.e. dhyana. In different Upanishads, different systems of meditation are prescribed, such as :

Udagitha Vidya – the system of meditation of the Udagith;
Panchagni Vidya – the system of meditation of five fires;
Madhu Vidya – the system of meditation of Madhu;
Ashwamedha Vidya– the system of meditation on the horse-sacrifice;
Shandilya Vidya – the system of meditation of Shandilya, and
Prana Vidya – the system of meditation on prana.

During the period of Buddha also, the word vidya was used for the system of meditation. Buddha often said, 'I have practised all vidyas.' It means, he had practised all kinds of meditations. So, vidya means to engage oneself in meditation, and avidya means to follow the path of karma.

How do we know that avidya is karma, and vidya is dhyana? There are evidences and explanations of this in the Upanishads.

It is often maintained in the scriptures that those given to the pleasures of life are blind to the inner reality. They are like fools, who work in the world but do not know what for. Such people are called the followers of the path of avidya.

When one is conscious of his inner spiritual being, he is called *vidyawana* or *vidwana*, and someone who is not aware of his inner spiritual being, is called *avidwana*.

This mantra says, those people who follow the path of karma alone, either with selfish or unselfish motive, with charitable or exploiting tendency, enter into blinding darkness. It means, the spiritual aspirant, who follows no other path than the path of karma, his spiritual and inner personality and awareness enter into a deep unconscious state, and no evolution of personality or awareness takes place.

Those who practise only meditation and not karma, their lot is also pitiable. Why? The mantra says that those who practise only meditation, and do not exercise their physical body, their consciousness also enters into a deep realm of darkness. As a result, when they sit in meditation, they are unable to illumine their soul. The luminous nature of their consciousness remains unexpressed. There is darkness within just as there is lack of expression without.

Many believe that karma yoga is the ultimate yoga which evolves the soul, and helps it to reach the highest. Others maintain that through meditation alone evolution is possible. This mantra refutes these beliefs, and says, that vidya and avidya both have their own limitations, and because of these limitations, souls enter into the dark planes of existence.

Mantra 10 :–

अन्य देवाहुर्विद्ययान्यदाहुरविद्यया ।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ॥१०॥

Anya déwa ahurwīdyaya anyadāhuh awīdyayā.
ītī shushruma dhērāṅāṁ yé nastad vīchachakshīré. [10]

Translation & Explanation :

"We have heard from the wise ones, who explained to us that, thus definitely through vidya it is different, and through avidya it is different; so it is explained."

The rishi of the mantra says that from the wise ones of the past, we have come to know about this great truth, that by karma and meditation, different states of consciousness are achieved.

By vidya one is able to develop the introvert state of mind. Through avidya one develops capacities of the senses, mind and intellect. Those who only develop introvert stages of mind, are unable to live successfully in the world of matter and facts. And, those who engage themselves only in karma, are unable to discover their inner soul. So, there are certain disadvantages and certain advantages of these two paths.

The advantage of vidya is discovery of soul, and the disadvantage is disability to live and adjust in life as an expert.

The advantage of avidya or karma is to be an expert and to have wonderful intellectual and mental capacities, and its disadvantage is that such a man is totally unaware of his spiritual soul.

So, the rishi says that we have heard from the wise ones of the past that the advantages and disadvantages of vidya and avidya are different. 'In the past we have heard' means that there must be some past reference in the Vedas. Yajurveda is the second Veda in order, therefore, the reference is either to the Rigveda or the Yajurveda itself.

By karma, the consciousness of man goes through the chandra marga or the path of the lunar system, and through meditation, it follows the surya marga, or the path of the solar system. The Gita and several other old texts maintain this view. The Rigveda says, by karma one develops within oneself a kind of Aham or I-ness. As a result, the senses are nourished and mind accumulates more and more samskaras.

Through the path of meditation one is able to cross over the realm of darkness. There is no path other than this.

The Yajurveda mentions the paths of karma and meditation are two different ones. Those who are full of petty desires and normal ambitions go through the path of avidya, called pravritti marga. It is the path of action and enjoyment. The other path is a luminous one, the path of meditation. Those who do not care for the life of the senses, and disregard worldly objects; for them is the path of meditation.

The path of karma precedes dhyana or vidya. Those who would practise vidya or dhyana before perfecting karma, will enter into darkness. It may be a psychic darkness or darkness of the inner self. Many aspirants who do not complete the course of karma yoga or avidya in this or in previous lives, do not proceed even an inch on the path of spiritual life. Many great sannyasins, practising meditation for 20 years or even more, could not cross the realm of darkness. They couldn't go beyond it. To get over the darkness and suspension of consciousness in meditation, one has to finish his karmas first.

Karma means prosperity, according to materialistic explanations. Karmas in life, whether good or bad, are processes of perfection. The Upanishad says that by vidya you travel by one road, and by avidya you travel by a different one. Vidya bestows introversion, and

avidya brings extroversion. One leads inside, and the other leads outside. One makes your tendencies objective, the other makes your tendencies subjective. One gives tension, and the other peace and tranquility. But both, at the same time, lead one to darkness. Dhyana leads a spiritual aspirant to a psychic state of darkness, which is difficult to overcome.

Mantra 11 :–

विद्यां चाविद्यां च यस्तद्वेदोभय् सह ।
अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययामृतमश्नुते ।।११।।

Wīdyāṁ cha awīdyāṁ cha yastad védōbhayaṃ saha,
awīdyayā mrityuṁ tērtwā wīdyaya amritam ashnuté. [11]

Translation & Explanation :

"He who knows both vidya and avidya together, crosses death by avidya and obtains immortality by vidya."

Those who know both karma and dhyana, action and meditation, and practise them together, their case becomes different. They do not enter the path of darkness. Because of their practice of avidya, they cross death, and because they practise vidya, they enjoy immortality.

The words '*mrityum tertwa*' and '*amritam ashnute*' need explanation. By following the path of vidya and avidya both, something strange happens. As mentioned before, an individual crosses death with the help of avidya. What is this death?

Death is verily the dark passage in the realm of your personality. It is a barrier between the conscious and superconscious life. A river which flows in between two realms, the realm where we are, and the realm beyond, is the river of death. The realm of absolute unconsciousness is the realm of death. Only one person can cross that river of death, and he is know as *Yama* in

Hindu mythology. People wrongly interpret him as the god of death. I call him the all-pervading and all-powerful spiritual consciousness of man. The 'river' is known as *Vaitarani*. Vaitarani is also misunderstood, even by Hindus. They think that after the death of man, his soul crosses a particular river. But, the whole thing is misconceived. Death does not mean actual death, but means complete dissolution of consciousness. This state of consciousness is very difficult to pass through. The doer of good actions, the performer of hard penance or tapas, the person who has lived a spiritual life throughout, he alone is able to cross this river of consciousness, where all the dimensions of consciousness are dissolved. This state of consciousness is called mrityu, or 'death'.

Does it mean death of the physical body? No. As long as one is in this physical body, he is aware of everything. But, the moment the soul is out of the body, the consciousness dissolves until it is born again in a new form. The state of dissolution of consciousness is called mrityu.

Mrityu may be explained in two ways. Firstly as death of the physical body, and also withdrawal of awareness from this physical body into the innermost center. This center may be anahata or any chakra in the body. The awareness is withdrawn as if it is sucked up from all the paths and is concentrated at a particular point in the body. This is a kind of death for the world of senses. So, it is true to say that by avidya one crosses death.

Secondly, by karmas one exhausts samskaras, accumulated karmas are destroyed. It is known as karm-akshaya. When the storehouse of the karma is absolutely empty, and the awareness is passing through the unconscious state, there will be no difficulty in crossing the river of death or unconsciousness. Only a man of ignorance or avidya will find it difficult to go beyond that

river. If samskaras are annihilated, it is easy for the aspirant to go through the states of dhyana and samadhi.

What is amritam? It is a state beyond. Some call it *turiya*, others call it samadhi, or Self-realization or God-realization. This Upanishad calls it amritam, it means 'no death'. It is the refraction of consciousness. It is a state where consciousness revives again, but in a different dimension. These states are achieved in meditation, and not outside. In meditation one goes through different phases of awareness according to his meditational capacity. One who has no karmas, desires, ambition, or fear of losing anything will cross that realm of death easily. And when his awareness revives again, he enjoys immortality. Amrit means 'immortality.' It is a state when the soul goes beyond death.

One should practise karma and meditation side by side. He should neither postpone meditation for karma, nor karma for meditation. It appears there is grossness in the soul or personality. In the subtle dimension of consciousness there appears to be some gravity or rigidity. The grossness of the personality makes it impossible for a sadhak to go beyond the realm of darkness, before actually working out the samskaras in life.

This mantra is a guide to life. One can understand now, that karma and dhyana are both necessary and go together. There should be a happy blending of the two. A synthesis between the two paths of karma and dhyana, or a compromise between extroversion and introversion is necessary in life.

Mantra 12 :–

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽसम्भूतिमुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ सम्भूत्याँ रताः ।।१२।।

Andhaṁ tamah prawīshantī yéésambhūtīm upāsaté,
tatō bhūya īwa té tamō ya u sambhūtyāṁ ratāh. [12]

Translation & Explanation:

"Those who worship the unmanifest reality enter into blinding darkness. Those who worship the manifest, also enter into a denser realm of darkness."

The rishi in this mantra says, that those who worship asambhuti, or the unmanifest, enter into blinding darkness. And those who worship sambhuti enter into greater realms of darkness. The word asambhuti stands for unmanifest, and sambhuti stands for the manifest. What is this manifest and unmanifest? It should mean the unmanifest consciousness (asambhuti) and the manifest consciousness (sambhuti).

What are the unmanifest and manifest consciousness?

When the consciousness has something objective to dwell upon, it is called manifest consciousness. When it dwells on something which is subjective, or is subject to maya, it is called sambhuti, (meditation on any concrete object comes under the sambhuti category).

Yoga has two paths of meditation. One is known as sakar meditation, or meditation on a concrete object. The other is known as nirakar meditation, i.e. meditation on the formless. Sakar and nirakar meditations are two paths or stages in meditation.

When the consciousness has a pratyaya or a support, it is known as sambhuti, or the manifested consciousness. One can meditate on any object like a chakra or yantra. A chakra is sakar, because it has a form. Sound is also sambhuti, because it is manifest. A thought is also a manifest form of Brahman. Meditation on the inner sound in nada yoga, even when not perceptible to the eyes, is meditation on the manifest. Concentration on ideas, and psychic movements, is also meditation on the manifest consciousness. Things visible to the eyes, audible to the ears, perceptible to the skin, conceivable to the mind, all come under 'meditation on the manifest'.

Anything intelligible to the mind or within the reach of the senses comes under manifest consciousness. These may have a shape or may not. They may have a gross form, or only vibrations like music and sound.

What is asambhuti, or the unmanifest? In meditation, when everything disappears and some inner symbols are seen, it is called meditation on the unmanifest. The conscious and subconscious symbols belong to the manifest, and the symbols of the unconscious state belong to the unmanifest.

Meditation on sleep awareness and the experience of sleep in the form of consciousness, is a meditation on the unmanifest. So, all the states of experiences pertaining to the unconscious state of personality belong to asambhuti. And, the whole world which we are able to see, including mind and senses, is called sambhuti or the manifest.

The Upanishad says, that those who meditate on the unmanifest state of consciousness, experience a state of blinding darkness, which is full of psychic experiences. He does not find light. Therefore, many teachers prohibit their disciples from meditating on asambhuti.

A mantra in the Rigveda says:

"*Ekam sat vipraha bahudha vadanti indram varunam matrishwanam ahuhu*", which means:

"The ultimate truth is One, but *vipraha* (those who know) talk about it differently; some say, He is Indra, others say, He is Varuna, yet others say, He is Matrishwa."

But, in reality He is ONE.

The Rigveda declares, "The Truth is One."

The Yajurveda also harps on the same tune and says:

"Look around the ten directions or dimensions of the Earth; look to East, West, North and South. Look

within, as far as you can. Look into the human beings. Look into the jungles. Look into animals and other creatures, and you will find there is only One essence of existence."

In the Vedic period, pantheism was very popular. Pantheism migrated from India to different countries of the world. The symbols of Atlantis civilization are well known to people. From this mantra we understand, that though for beginners idol-worship or meditation on a conscious symbol is essential, yet one should not forget to conceive within oneself the unmanifest stage of consciousness. Yoga has been able to present a synthesis of thoughts. There is no harm in practising both sakar and nirakar meditations.

Spiritual evolution is a great task and responsibility. To expound a thought, is not for the sake of the thought itself, but is for the sake of the spiritual evolution of the individual. Everyone has to evolve spiritually. Therefore, practice of meditation on the manifest or the unmanifest is essential.

Mantra 13:-

अन्यदेवाहुः सम्भवादन्यदाहुरसम्भवात् ।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ॥१३॥

Anyadéwāhuh sambhawāt anyadāhuh asambhawāt,
ītī shushruma dhērāṅāṁ yé nastad wīchachakshīré. [13]

Translation & Explanation:

"By meditating on the manifest, definitely a different thing is obtained, and by meditation on the unmanifest something else is obtained– that is what they say."

In the Yogasutra of Patanjali it is said:

भवप्रत्ययो विदेहप्रकृतिलयानाम्
Bhavapratyayo videhaprakritilayānām

Bhavapratyah: birth is the cause; *videha*: disembodied yogis; *prakritilayaanaam*: the yogis who are merged into prakriti.

"The videha and prakritilaya yogis have birth as the cause of asamprajnata samadhi. (This is bhava-pratyaya asamprajnata samadhi.)

Usually samadhi is attainable through faith, by courage, memory and higher form of intelligence and it is through these different methods, according to the intensity of application and urge, that the student can attain samadhi sooner or later. However, we find many people who have practised nothing reaching the state of samadhi very easily. This is because at the time of birth they got all the traces of their past karma. Thus there are examples of persons going beyond the barriers of lower consciousness at a very young age. For example, the great saint Jnaneshwar and similarly Ramana Maharshi of Arunachala, who attained samadhi when he was in his teens.

In this sutra Patanjali says that the two types of yogis, namely those who are disembodied and those who are merged into prakriti, can attain asamprajnata samadhi right from birth. They do not have to practise any preliminary stages like dharana, dhyana or vitarka, vichara, etc.

Those who meditate on unconscious or unmanifest consciousness (asambhuti), develop the prakritilaya consciousness. As a result, they are deeply immersed into nothingness and are unaware of the world outside. They come in touch with the reservoir of knowledge, but when they come out, they know nothing of what they saw. During certain moments of their life they are excited. In that moment of excitement they speak out about what they have seen inside. Such people are called *olia sadhus* in India. They remain calm and quiet, but at certain moments, they speak out about some

mysteries of life. It is a gift of meditation on asambhuti. It has its own disadvantage. The spiritual aspirant sometimes is not in touch with the Higher Consciousness. He goes to that realm and comes back, and ultimately the touch is lost. Both sambhuti and asambhuti have their own advantages and disadvantages. The Upanishad says, 'that this they have heard from the wise people in the past'.

Mantra 14:-

सम्भूतिं च विनाशं च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह।
विनाशेन मृत्युं तीर्त्वा सम्भूत्यामृतमश्नुते ॥१४॥

Sambhūtīṁ cha wīnāshaṁ cha yastad védōbhayaṃ saha,
wīnāshéna mrityuṁ tērtwā sambhūtya amritam ashnuté. [14]

Translation & Explanation:

"He who knows the impersonal God and the personal God both as ONE, overcomes death through the personal God and obtains immortality through the impersonal One."

As in mantra 11, here also it is said, that the aspirant or the yogi who believes and practises meditation on personal (sakar) and impersonal (nirakar) God, transcends the states of awareness and unawareness. He realizes Supreme Consciousness which is eternal.

It is realized by an aspirant in meditation that the mind or consciousness needs a pratyaya, otherwise it is led into darkness. Therefore, there should be a symbol to base meditation on. A yogi should clearly realize that all forms belong to the realms of maya. In meditation, anything seen or felt, like a vision or experience, or like a sensation of electric flow, or heat in the chakras, all these belong to maya, or the manifest consciousness. Sooner or later, according to one's evolution on the path of meditation, these forms have to be transcended.

In the Yogasutra it mentions, that to introvert the consciousness and to overcome the obstacles on the path of meditation one must have a form for the consciousness to dwell upon. It helps to cut off connections with the objects of the world. Ultimately, the form is also dropped and lastly, the formless manifests. The formless is not to be introduced; it develops spontaneously. The Upanishad accepts the limitations of meditation on a concrete object, like chakra, devi, devata, symbol, mantra, tantra or yantra, even if there be ekatattwa, or One principle.

The practice of yoga has two aspects: the sadhana and the sadhya. Sadhana means 'the means', and sadhya is 'the end'. Now, meditation on a concrete object is sadhana. What is sadhya then? What is the end or purpose of sadhana? Is it for samadhi? No. It is to introvert the mind and to remove the obstacles. When meditation on one tattwa continues, obstacles or difficulties do not hinder you. Mind is able to overcome them. In this Upanishad, the rishi tries to point out the limitations of each method, as also its importance. The limitation of meditation on a personal God is psychic darkness. The limitation of meditation on impersonal things is still more darkness.

The merit of meditation on a personal God in the form of some symbol, is that one is able to cross that realm of darkness, which is called mrityu or death due to the awareness of a symbol. The symbol may be *Om*, or music, or the form of a devi or a luminous star. The awareness of symbol carries one through the dark passage. And if the awareness is lost, one gets lost into darkness.

By meditation on impersonal God, or the supreme Purusha, one obtains immortality. What is meant by immortality here? It is the highest state of consciousness, which is ever abiding, during meditation and

samadhi. The spiritual aspirants are sometimes misled by teachers, who ask them to meditate on an abstract thing. Or, sometimes teachers teach their students to hate meditation on a concrete object, by advocating the philosophy of nirakar.

A gross consciousness cannot appreciate or comprehend the fine and subtle principles of truth. Therefore, satya or the ultimate truth, should be taken in two forms. The Brihat Aranyak Upanishad says, "The truth has twofold manifestation; one is in a form, and the other is without a form. Form and formless both are manifestations of the same truth or reality."

The fineness of consciousness enables one to comprehend the truth in meditation. If mind is pure and subtle, the ultimate form of truth becomes clear. Therefore, meditation on concrete and abstract both should be accepted and practised.

I would like to illustrate this truth. I do not like to meditate on a concrete object, but I accept that I might have been a yogi in my previous life, where I finished the course of meditation on the manifest Brahman. By virtue of that, now I am born with an evolved consciousness. If a yogi is compelled to go through a meditation on concrete objects, he will be confused. Therefore, a guru is supposed to know where the evolution of a spiritual sadhak stands, and whether he needs sakar or nirakar upasana.

Suppose, a mental patient comes to you. Then, you should give him meditation suitable for his mental treatment. If he starts meditating on an abstract idea, he will not succeed because his consciousness needs a solid support. For such a person a gross idea or form is necessary.

In the first three mantras it was decided that neither dhyana nor karma alone is sufficient for one. One should practise both.

The next three mantras maintain that neither meditation on sakar (concrete) alone, nor meditation on nirakar (abstract) alone, will lead one to the highest. He who considers the impersonal God as ONE, is able to attain the highest spiritual state.

SIXTH WAVE

Mantra 15:–

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥१५॥

Hīraṅmayéna pātréṅa satyasya apihitaṁ mukhaṁ,
tattwaṁ pūshannapāvriṅu satyadharmāya drishtayé. [15]

Translation & Explanation:

"The face of truth is covered by a golden vessel. Oh, nourisher, open that so that I, the practitioner of truth, may behold Thee."

Ishavasya Upanishad has two recensions. One belongs to the great rishi Kanwa, and the other to Madhyandins. According to the recension of Kanwa and his disciples, this Upanishad has 18 mantras. And, according to the recension of Madhyandins, it has 14 mantras. I personally believe that it has only 14 mantras, because the mantras, 15 to 18 are prayers.

This mantra appears to be a prayer in the form of a collection of exclamations, revelations and self-experiences. When the rishi crossed the barrier of death and darkness, he saw something. What is that something? He explains the process of self-experience. He sees the light called pushan (sun). That sun is far beyond the realm of darkness. He says that the face of truth is covered by a golden lid or enveloped in a

golden vessel. What is that vessel? It is known as hiranyagarbha, or the golden egg. Within the folds of the golden egg, is the experience of the Supreme Purusha. It is not a kind of prayer directed towards God. Rather, it is the experience of the rishi, who has attained the highest stage of meditation. He says, 'I see the face of the Truth. It is the Highest Consciousness, enveloped in a golden vessel'. To know the nature of the vessel, a deep study of Vedanta is necessary, or a deep understanding of the Vedas.

In the Bible there is a reference to the Light. Moses, the great prophet of the Hebrews, saw the Light, and in front of it was a golden vessel. It is a symbolic experience. The golden vessel is the veil of consciousness. The Supreme Consciousness is hidden by some kind of consciousness. The golden vessel is not of gold metal. During the moments of meditation when one goes beyond the region of darkness, and sees something like a golden pot, it is understood that the Truth is covered by a golden vessel. It is a kind of experience in meditation, when the last barrier of 'maya' is crossed. In order to remove the lid of the vessel, the deity of light is to be invoked. Here, the sun is not the sun of the sky. For the aspirants of yoga, sun and moon are the two great forces of deeper realms of consciousness.

Mantra 16:-

पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्य प्राजापत्य
व्यूह रश्मीन् समूह ।
तेजो यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि
योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ॥१६॥

Pūshannékarshé yama sūrya prājāpatya
vyūha rashmēn samūha
téjō yatté rūpaṁ kalyāṅatamaṁ tatté pashyāmī
yōōsāvasó purushah sōōhamasmī. [16]

Translation & Explanation:

"O Pushan (nourisher); O Ekarshe (seer of one); O Yama (controller); O Surya (sun); O Prajapatya (son of Prajapati); do thou disperse thy rays and concentrate thy brilliance, so that I may see thy auspicious form. Who is that Purusha? He I Am!"

This appears to be the utterance of the rishi in a very high state of spiritual experience. It is not possible to reproduce the exact sentences which Moses uttered, which Mohammed, Christ or Buddha uttered, in their states of ecstasy when the Light was seen. But, when they saw the Light, they did not want it to be there. They said, 'No, take away the Light; we do not want it!' This is exactly what happened to Arjuna, as stated in the eleventh chapter of the Gita. When the divine vision was laid open before him, Arjuna said to Krishna, 'I do not want it; it is so frightening, it is so inspiring; I do not want it. I want to see you as you were before'.

Many Sufi and Hindu saints reached the highest peak of consciousness, but when the highest consciousness was unfolded to them, they were unable to bear it, and wished to come down to the lower plane of consciousness. All these invocations are in respect to the higher Soul, the supreme Purusha, or higher cosmic consciousness. Pushan, Ekarshe, Yama, or the son of Prajapati, are invoked to disperse the rays, so that the rishi is able to see the Truth. It was not possible for him to bear the blazing light. He requests them to concentrate their brilliance so that the glare is no more there, and the Truth is unveiled. Then he will be able to see the auspicious form of the supreme Purusha. What is His form? Nobody knows. It is not the form we are capable of seeing by our consciousness. In order to see the face of Truth, or to experience the supreme Consciousness, or Purusha, the blazing light or the glare should be removed.

What is that light? What are those rays of the sun? They are the experiences which take place before the attainment of the highest consciousness. It is the experience which occurred in the lives of many great men. They all experienced the light of many thousands of suns, and were unable to bear it. The great light seems to be an obstacle in beholding the supreme experience of the highest consciousness.

On the highest plane of consciousness the rishi exclaims: 'Who is this purusha? The purusha is within. He I am'. It means, that the highest consciousness which is behind the Light; *that I am*. At this stage it seems the notion of 'dwaita', the notion of duality, and the notion of 'I' and 'my God', falls flat. It is at this moment, the little or the individual consciousness becomes one with the cosmic consciousness, losing its complete identity. Even as the drop of water mixed with the ocean gets itself lost, and can retain no separate identity, in the same manner the individual consciousness of man at this stage is completely liberated from the fragments of maya; and, it becomes ONE in experience with the Supreme. At that time, the difference between the meditator, the meditation and the object is completely annihilated.

Mantra 17:–

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।
ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥१७॥

Vāyuranīlam amritam athédam bhasmāntaṃ sharēram,
ōm kratō smara kritaṃ smara kratō smara kritaṃ smara. [17]

Translation & Explanation:

"Let my prana into universal prana; let this body to ashes; *Om*, O universal Atma, remember, do thou remember actions; O, universal Soul, remember actions!"

In this mantra, the utterances are completely broken. It appears there is not one complete idea. It seems that the rishi is uttering in a state of absolute unconsciousness; and therefore, words escaping from his mouth have no coordination. At one stage, he says, 'let the air, the individual prana, merge in the universal prana!' It means, let the small become ONE with the whole. Let this body fall into ashes. And then suddenly he remembers Vishnu, the universal Atma, who is the doer of all actions in the body. Since the entire verse has a broken theme, it is not possible to conclude the meaning. The ancient commentators have believed, that this seems to be the utterance of the rishi in the highest state of samadhi.

SEVENTH WAVE

Mantra 18:–

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान् विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युयोध्यस्मज्जुराणमेनो भूयिष्ठां ते नम उक्तिं विधेम ॥१८॥

Agné naya supathā rāyé asmān
wīshwānī déva vayunānī wīdwān,
yuyōdhyasmat juhurāṅaméno
bhūyīshthāṁ té nama uktīṁ widhéma. [18]

Translation & Explanation:

"O, Agni, lead us on to prosperity through a good path; O, God! Thou the knower of many waves, remove from us complicated sins. We offer Thee our best salutations."

'O, Agni' means 'O, the dynamic consciousness'. It is dynamic, because this consciousness leads a sadhak through different states of consciousness, by the practise of dharana, dhyana and samadhi. When a sadhak is in the unconscious, he is led by the dynamic consciousness of samskaras, and that is agni. This path through which agni, or the dynamic consciousness, leads the sadhak, is a good and prosperous path. It leads to wealth. And, what is wealth? It is spiritual wealth. Again it is stated that the complicated sin should be removed. It means the removal of the eternal desires or the anadi vasana. The eternal craving of the soul is 'to exist or to be.'

ईशावास्योपनिषद्

शान्तिपाठ

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

ॐ ईशावास्यमिद्ं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ।।१।।

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छत्ं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ।।२।।

असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः ।
ताꣳस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ।।३।।

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो
नैनद्देवा आप्नुवन्पूर्वमर्षत् ।
तद्धावतोऽन्यानत्येति तिष्ठत्त-
स्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति ।।४।।

तदेजति तन्नैजति तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके ।
तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ।।५।।

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ।।६।।

यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ।।७।।

स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रणमस्नाविरं
शुद्धमपापविद्धम्।
कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयम्भूर्याथातथ्यतो-
ऽर्थान् व्यदधाच्छाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ।।८।।

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ।।९।।

अन्य देवाहुर्विद्ययान्यदाहुरविद्यया।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ।।१०।।

विद्यां चाविद्यां च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह।
अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययामृतमश्नुते ।।११।।

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽसम्भूतिमुपासते।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ सम्भूत्यां रताः ।।१२।।

अन्यदेवाहुः सम्भवादन्यदाहुरसम्भवात्।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ।।१३।।

सम्भूतिं च विनाशं च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह।
विनाशेन मृत्युं तीर्त्वा सम्भूत्यामृतमश्नुते ।।१४।।

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम्।
तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ।।१५।।

पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्य प्राजापत्य
व्यूह रश्मीन् समूह।
तेजो यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि
योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ।।१६।।

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।
ॐ क्रतो स्मर क्रतं स्मर क्रतो स्मर क्रतं स्मर ।।१७।।

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान् विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो भूयिष्ठां ते नम उक्तिं विधेम ।।१८।।

शान्तिपाठ

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

ISHAVASYA UPANISHAD

Shantipath

Ōm pūrṅamadah pūrṅamīdaṁ pūrṅāt pūrṅamudachyaté,
pūrṅasya pūrṅamādāya pūrṅaméwa awashīshvaté.

Ōm Shāntīh Shāntīh Shāntīh

Ōm ēshāwāsyam īdam sarawam yatkīñcha jagatyām jagat,
téna tyakténa bhuñjēthā mā gridhah kasyaswīd dhanaṃ. [1]

Kurwannéwéha karmāṅī jījēwīshéchchhataṃ samāh,
éwam twayī nānyathétōōstī na karma līpyaté naré. [2]

Asuryā nāma té lokā andhéna tamasā āvritāhā,
tāṃsté prétyābhīgachchhantī yé ké chātmahanō janāh. [3]

Anéjadékaṁ manasō jawēyō
nánaddévā āpnuwan pūrwamarshat,
taddhāwatōōnyāna tyétī tīshthat
tasmīnnapō mātarīshwā dadhātī. [4]

Tadéjatī tannájatī teddūré tadwantīké,
tadantarasya sarwasya tadu sarwasyāsya bāhyatah. [5]

Yastu sarwāṅī bhūtānyātmanyéwa anupashyatī,
sarwabhūtéshu chātmānaṁ tatō na wījugupsaté. [6]

Yasmīn sarwāṅī bhūtānyātmáwa abhūdwījānatah,
tatra kō mōhah kah shōka ékatwam anupashyatah. [7]

Sa paryagāchchhukram akāyam avraṇam asnāwīraṃ
shuddham apāpawīddham,
kawīrmanēshē parībhūh swayambhūr yāthātathyatō
ōrthān vyadadhāt shāshwatēbhyah samābhyah. [8]

Andhan tamah prawīshantī yééwīdyāmupāsaté,
tatō bhūya īwa té tamō ya u wīdyāyāṃ ratāh. [9]

Anya déwa āhurwīdyayā anyadāhuh awīdyayā,
ītī shushruma dhērāṅāṁ yé nastad vīchachakshīré. [10]

Wīdyāṁ cha awīdyāṁ cha yastad védōbhayaṃ saha,
awīdyayā mrityuṁ tērtwā wīdyayā amritam ashnuté. [11]

Andhaṁ tamah prawīshantī yéésambhūtīm upāsaté,
tatō bhūya īwa té tamō ya u sambhūtyāṃ ratāh. [12]

Anyadéwāhuh sambhawāt anyadāhuh asambhawāt,
ītī shushruma dhērāṅāṁ yé nastad wīchachakshīré. [13]

Sambhūtīṁ cha wināshaṁ cha yastad védōbhayaṃ saha,
wināshéna mrityuṁ tértwā sambhūtyā amritaṁ ashnuté. [14]

Hīraṅmayéna pātréṅa satyasya apīhitaṁ mukhaṁ,
tattwaṁ pūshannapāvriṅu satyadharmāya drishtayé. [15]

Pūshannékarshé yama sūrya prājāpatya
vyūha rashmēn samūha,
Téjō yatté rūpaṁ kalyāṅatamaṁ tatté pashyāmī
yōōsāvasó purushah sōōhamasmī. [16]

Vāyuranīlam amritam athédam bhasmāntam sharēram,
ōm kratō smara kritaṃ smara kratō smara kritaṃ smara. [17]

Agné naya supathā rāyé asmān
wīshwānī déva vayunānī wīdwān,
yuyōdhyasmat juhurāṅaménō
bhūyīshthāṁ té nama uktīṁ wīdhéma. [18]

Shantipath

Ōm pūrṅamadah pūrṅamīdaṁ pūrṅāt pūrṅamudachyaté,
pūrṅasya pūrṅamādāya pūrṅaméwa awashīshyaté.

Ōm Shāntīh Shāntīh Shāntīh

That is full, this is full. From full, the full is taken, the full has come. If you take out full from the full, the full alone remains.

Om, Shanti Shanti Shanti.

All this, whatsoever moves in this universe, is indwelled by Isha : therefore, through renunciation do thou enjoy, and do not covet anybody's wealth. (1)

Let every man wish to live for a hundred years while performing karmas in this world. Thus, other than this, there is no way out for you; karmas do not bind the man. (2)

There are worlds covered with blinding darkness. They are known as sunless worlds. The killers of the self depart to these worlds. (3)

Atma is motionless, but it is swifter than the mind. Senses can never overtake it. It runs ahead of them. While sitting, it goes faster than those who run after it. In this Atma, the individual soul places the karmas. (4)

That moves on and does not move. It is far and near. It is inside and outside of all. It is all, and *it is all.* (5)

He who constantly sees all beings in the higher Self or in the spiritual consciousness, does not shrink nor does he hate. (6)

When all beings become one in one's own higher consciousness, then what delusion and grief is there for one who is constantly seeing oneness? (7)

He is all-pervading, bright, bodyless and unscathed. He has no muscles. He is pure and sinless. The wise ones say, He is omniscient and Self-born. He is functioning everywhere since eternity. (8)

Those who follow the path of avidya, enter into blinding darkness. More than that, those who are engrossed in vidya, also enter in the great blinding darkness. (9)

We have heard from the wise ones, who explained to us that, thus definitely through vidya it is different, and through avidya it is different; so it is explained. (10)

He who knows both vidya and avidya together, crosses death by avidya and obtains immortality by vidya. (11)

Those who worship the unmanifest reality enter into blinding darkness. Those who worship the manifest, also enter into a denser realm of darkness. (12)

By meditating on the manifest, definitely a different thing is obtained and by meditation on the unmanifest something else is obtained– that is what they say. (13)

He who knows the impersonal God and the personal God both as ONE, overcomes death through the personal God and obtains immortality through the impersonal one. (14)

The face of truth is covered by a golden vessel. Oh nourisher, open that so that I, the practitioner of Truth, may behold thee. (15)

O Pushan (nourisher); O Ekarshe (seer of one); O Yama (controller); O Surya (sun); O Prajapataya (son of Prajapati); do thou disperse thy rays and concentrate thy brilliance, so that I may see thy auspicious form. Who is that purusha? He I am! (16)

Let my prana into universal prana; let this body to ashes; *Om*, O universal Atma, remember, do thou remember actions; O, universal Soul, remember actions! (17)

O, Agni, lead us on to prosperity through a good path; O God! Thou the knower of many waves, remove from us complicated sins. We offer Thee our best salutations. (18)

That is full, this is full. From full, the full is taken, the full has come. If you take out full from the full, the full alone remains.

Om, Shanti Shanti Shanti.

PHONETIC PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

The following system has been adopted to assist persons who are not familiar with the Devanagari alphabet in pronouncing the Sanskrit slokas of Ishavasya Upanishad.

Sanskrit		text		pronounced		
अ	=	a	= *u*	as in		but
आ	=	ā	= *a*	”	”	art
ए (ॅ)	=	é	= *a*	”	”	lady
ऐ (ॅा)	=	á	= *ay*	”	”	ray
इ (f)	=	ī	= *ea*	”	”	real
ई (ी)	=	ē	= *ee*	”	”	seed
उ (ु)	=	u	= *ui*	”	”	suit
ऊ (ू)	=	ū	= *oo*	”	”	root
ओ (ो)	=	ō	= *o*	”	”	no
औ (ौ)	=	ó	= *ow*	”	”	blow
ं	=	ṁ	= *mn*	”	”	column
द	=	d	= *d*	”	”	under
च	=	ch	= *ch*	”	”	church
ध	=	dh	= *dd*	”	”	rudder
ढ	=	ddh	= *ddh*	”	”	buddhist
थ	=	th	= *tt*	”	”	flatter
ण	=	ṅ	= *n*	”	”	sing
ग	=	g	= *g*	”	”	gland
ऋ (ृ)	=	ri	= *rea*	”	”	read
ँ	=	ṃ	= *goom*			